

**STUDENT FEEDBACK ON THE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS USED
DURING THE THIRD SEMESTER OF THE UNDERGRADUATE
PERSIAN FARSI BASIC COURSE AT THE DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE**

A Doctoral Dissertation Research

Presented to the
Faculty of Argosy University, San Francisco
College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

by

Jahangir Giahi Saravani

July, 2013

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July 15, 2013

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Ana Lomas, Ed.D., Chair

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Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation Research

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Ana Lomas, Ed.D., Chair

Geraldine Forte, Member

Department: College of Education

ABSTRACT

Students at the Undergraduate Persian Farsi (UPF) School located in the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) in Monterey, California complain that their third-semester homework assignments are not effective and are not helpful to them. The purpose of this study was to elicit students' feelings and opinions about the types of homework assignments that they received during the third semester.

A total of 108 students volunteered to participate in this study. The research methodology employed in this study was qualitative. The participants completed a questionnaire on third-semester homework assignments.

The students' questionnaire responses indicated that students had mixed feelings about some types of homework assignments, favored some others, and disliked a few. For a deeper understanding of students' perceptions of homework, further research is highly recommended.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Since 2004, the Department of Defense (DOD) has increased its expectation of language proficiency for the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) graduates and has employed a new assessment standard--DLPT5 (Please see definition of terms p. 19) to assess students' listening and reading proficiency skills. The then-existing version of the Undergraduate Persian Farsi (UPF) School's curriculum did not adequately meet the new and high demands of the DOD. Consequently, the DLIFLC's top decision makers, with the cooperation of the UPF School, established a curriculum center to revise the existing curriculum and to provide a new curriculum that could respond to the new demand. The curriculum developers assigned to this center have already provided textbooks for the first semester, and they are working on the second semester's textbooks; they have not yet produced any textbooks for the third semester.

Statement of the Problem

The students in the Undergraduate Persian Farsi School at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center constantly complain that 1) the time they spend doing the homework assignments takes most of their out-of-school hours' time and doesn't leave them time to do independent study or prepare for the next day's classes, and 2) that the homework assignments are not effective or relevant to the daily learning objectives and therefore not helpful to them.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to elicit students' feelings and opinions regarding the homework assignments that are used during the third semester of the UPF language course at DLIFLC. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher will make recommendations to the UPF School about the most effective and helpful types of homework.

Background of the Problem

According to the students' end-of-course survey questionnaires (ESQ, 2012, p. 13), of 12 students who responded to the survey's specific question regarding the amount of time they spent on their homework, six students (50%) reported that they spent more than two hours to two and one-half-hours to complete their homework assignments every day. Similarly, another group of students' (13 students) responses to the same question on the prior year's ESQ (2011, p. 13) indicated that five students spent more than two and one-half hours completing their homework assignments.

Recently the Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization of the DLIFLC (2011) published a handout entitled "*Strategic Plan and Time Studies*" which focuses on homework and other student issues like time management. The handout states that "The objective of this study is to determine how much time is actually available for homework and out-of-class activities at the DLIFLC, and how the DLIFLC students manage their available study time outside of class" (p. 3). The study is not yet complete, therefore, the results are not available at this time.

The unavailability of an updated curriculum and the lack of a standard homework policy that all instructors of all teaching teams can follow have led the UPF's

administrators to provide a temporary homework guideline to fill the gap during the development of a new curriculum and a general homework policy. This temporary homework policy, as directed by the dean of the UPF School, holds each teaching team responsible for providing their students with homework assignments. The homework policy guidelines consist of the following:

1. The teaching team is responsible for assigning homework on a daily basis.
2. The amount of homework should not take an average student more than one and one-half hours to complete.
3. The main purpose of homework is to help students review and reinforce what they have learned and to preview the new lesson.
4. The homework should come in a variety of forms and engage students in all modalities.
5. The teaching team is responsible for providing feedback to students on their homework. (Zhu, 2012).

Although having the above guidelines is much better than having no guidelines at all, it leaves a gap of uniformity regarding homework. That is, in each team, teachers are required to provide homework to their students. Examples of homework assignments include: 1) one team (811) provides a book of homework for several weeks ahead of time (1- 40 assignments) and asks students to work on one homework assignment every day. Although this strategy is convenient for the teachers on the teaching team because they don't have to worry about every day's out-of-class assignments, this strategy seems to create problems. One such problem is that there is no control regarding relevance to the daily objectives, nor is there any scientific support for the strategy.

Other teams operate differently. For instance, in some teaching teams, instructors take turns assigning homework and each teacher provides one homework assignment every six days. Although this method gives teachers enough time to produce an effective homework assignment, there is no control regarding the content of the homework assignment or of the relevance to daily instructional objectives.

Regardless of the kind of strategy that each teaching team or instructor uses, the main problem with this situation is that both teaching team leaders and instructors eventually end up with a collection of homework assignments that they use over and over, year after year. As a result, students receive outdated, irrelevant, and ineffective assignments that don't help them master the language.

The following information demonstrates some recently graduated students' experiences with the homework assignments they received from their teaching teams. This information is drawn from the students' end of course questionnaire (ESQ) gathered during the last two years.

Summary of 12 students' response to ESQ (2012, p. 13)

One student spent one-half hour or less per day,

Two students spent one hour to one and one-half hours,

Two students spent one and one-half hours to two hours,

Six students spent more than two hours to two and one-half hours, and

One student spent more than two and one-half hours.

Based on the responses, more than 60% of the students claimed that they spent more than one and one-half hours completing their homework assignments. Based on the temporary guidelines, this statistic shows that most of the students spent an hour more

than what was suggested by the school's dean (one hour to one and one-half hours for average students). As a result, students argue that they could use this extra time for self-study and preparation for the next day's lessons. Students contend that after they finish their after-school military duties, eat supper, do their chores, spend more than two hours on homework, and go to bed at 10 PM, as required by military policy, there is no time left for anything else, especially when they must rise at 5 A.M. to perform their morning military duties.

Summary of students' ESQ (2011, p. 13)

Two students spent one hour or less,

Three students spent more than one-half hour to one hour,

Three students spent more than 1 hour to 1 1/2 hours,

One student spent more than one and one-half hours to two hours and

Five students spent more than two and one-half hours.

Based on this report, despite the suggestions made in the temporary homework guideline, almost 50% of the students spent at least one hour more than they are required completing homework. Using students' leisure time for homework deprives them of rest, and as a result, the next day they fall asleep during class. According to many instructors and the researcher's personal observations, a number of students fall asleep during the class day and in order to stay awake they stand up during class hours. They either take a nap during the 10-minute break between classes, or they ask the teacher's permission to go to the bathroom in the middle of a class session. In either case, the students' body language demonstrates their unprepared physical and mental condition with regards to the language classes.

Two groups of students from two different teams responded to the 2011 ESQs' (11/18/2011 and 11/21/2011) question: "How relevant was the assigned homework?"

Of 12 students who answered the above question (Q. 12, p.5) on 11/18/2011,

- One student reported that the assigned homework was "not relevant at all."
- Seven students indicated that the assigned homework was "somewhat relevant."
- Four students wrote that the assigned homework was "very relevant."

Similarly, of 14 students who responded to the same question on the ESQ dated 11/21/2011, p. 21,

- Six students felt that the assigned homework was "not relevant at all."
- Seven students found the assigned homework "somewhat relevant."
- Only one student believed that the assigned homework was "relevant."

Combining the responses of the 26 students demonstrates that only 19% of the students believed the homework assignments they received were relevant, 54% of the students expressed a mixed opinion such as "somewhat relevant," while nearly 27% of the students believed that their homework assignments were totally irrelevant.

The ESQ of 11/21/2011 (p. 24, Q 10) asked students' opinions about course content and materials, and question 14 asked students to comment on feedback and grading. The students' responses illustrate why students complain about homework. For example, of 14 students who were taught by Team 80061, four students made comments regarding the above questions.

- One student wrote: "Homework assignments at times seem irrelevant, or way above or below the level we are taught." (ESQ, Question 10, p. 24).

- One student responded to the same question, “The homework was a waste of time. It was never relevant and was assigned at random by teachers. The homework was just busy work that took away from the real study needed to get done. It was more of a hindrance than a help” (ESQ, Question 14, p. 24).

- One student, after comparing the first semester’s homework with the third semester’s homework, pointed out that they received more effective feedback during the first semester than the third semester. About the third semester’s homework, this student said, “the majority of the homework was assigned as a requirement of the school house without forethought into the effectiveness of the given material” (ESQ, Question 14, p. 25). The same student also pointed out that, “As the course progressed, the standards for homework and feedback appeared to fall by the wayside and mostly did not follow the course material” (ESQ, Question 14, p. 25).

Regardless of the efforts made by the school’s administrators, or teaching teams, or both, the types of homework assignments that students receive from each team during the third semester reflect a lack of uniformity and/or standardization. Students’ ESQ comments show that they are confused when they see that their peers from different teams receive different homework assignments that may make more sense to them. For example, a student who graduated in July 2012 wrote, “Oftentimes I felt that each teaching team was giving different instructions” (ESQ, Question 3, 2012, p. 15). (Of course it is appropriate to let each teaching team use its own best judgment, but only if the instruction is good.)

Based on personal observation and experience, and on working with almost all department chairs, the researcher has noticed that some team members and even team

leaders don't even know what type of homework assignments their colleagues give to their students. The situation becomes even worse when a large number of new students arrive and the department chair divides/ assigns them to two teams (sister teams) and assigns a team leader for each team. The researcher has observed that the team leaders of the sister teams don't share information, such as the type of homework assignments that they give to their students. The researcher often notes that while some students within a teaching team receive feedback from their instructors, others claim that they never receive feedback from their teachers. For example, a July 2012 graduate wrote: "A good number of times all of the homework was not gone over" (ESQ, Question 14, 2012, p. 15).

An examination of students' opinions about the lack of uniformity in the type of homework assignments and the extent and nature of feedback among teaching teams demonstrates that in spite of existing temporary homework guidance, there is a lack of uniformity with regard to homework among the teaching teams; that is, within teams, between teams, or both. The current situation could cause students to be frustrated and confused. Although, in part, students' complaints may be due to the lack of uniformity with regard to homework and a lack of better communication between team leaders and team members, the complaints may also stem from unhealthy competition between teams. That is, unless team leaders and team members are instructed to do so, they do not volunteer to collaborate and share knowledge and information with one another. Thus, in the current situation, the students' constant complaints about their homework assignments have become an issue for them, for the instructors, and for the school's administrators as well.

Based on the acknowledgment of the existence of a problem with homework, the school's administrators recently took some positive steps to address the problem. For example, the administration has encouraged team-teaching, collaborative work among faculty members, cooperation with colleagues, and sharing experiences with one another. To some extent the effort has been successful and has received a positive response from some team leaders and instructors.

The goal and effort of the administration with regard to the homework phenomenon encouraged the researcher to design a research proposal to elicit useful information from students about their feelings and opinions about the type of homework assignments they receive during the third semester. The purpose of this research is to study students' feelings and opinions regarding the third semester's homework assignments that are used at the UPF language course at DLI. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher will make recommendations to the UPF School about the most effective and helpful types of homework.

The researcher believes that the findings of the study will provide useful information about the homework phenomenon that could be very helpful to the administration in its efforts to address the problem by establishing a homework policy to unify all departments' homework activities and harmonize a better cooperative, collaborative and communicative attitude and behavior among the UPF's faculty members.

Environment

The learning environment is highly affected by the military's "top-down" management policy. Teachers and students are expected to follow directions and do what

they are told. For example, students may be pulled out of the class sessions at any time by their Military Language Instructors (MLI); or teachers must follow the weekly schedule and cover certain pages during each class session. The weekly schedule is so intensive that teachers don't have time to respond to some of the students' questions. Such a learning environment potentially can have a negative effect on students' motivation and interest, and possibly may not encourage them to develop a strong interest in learning the language for the sake of knowing the language.

Some of the environmental characteristics of the UPF School are as follows:

- Since there are no specific standards for the type and level of difficulty of the supplementary reading and listening materials that each teacher uses in the classroom, students feel frustrated because some of these learning materials are too difficult and beyond their comprehension. As a result, students become disappointed, especially when they receive these types of materials as homework assignments. This situation discourages students and they start complaining that they don't have enough time for self-study and independent learning.
- The Institute, through various workshops, encourages instructors to conduct "student-centered" classes, but teachers are not comfortable following what the workshop presenters tell them to do because most of the workshop presenters are not teaching in the schools and don't have direct contact with students, therefore, their guidelines are based on theory rather than practice. As a result, because teachers are under pressure to follow their daily teaching schedule within a set time frame (50 minutes per class), they don't have enough time to apply the

theory in the classroom; also, teachers may not have enough understanding of the theory to apply it.

- Instructors are required to cover a certain number of pages from the textbooks in almost every class period; therefore, their first concern is to cover the assigned pages, and when the pages are covered, no time remains for anything else. One student commented on the ESQ that, “Teachers also want to rush through the lesson plans to say they have completed the plans yet they need to know that the lesson pace cannot be so fast that students don't understand” (ESQ, 2011, p. 24).
- The orientation of students is mostly just to get a passing grade. In conducting several official, as well as casual counseling sessions with many students, the researcher has observed that students’ goals are just to pass the tests. The homework assignments fail to provide students with the creativity, critical thinking, and self-directed learning that students need because the assignments don’t engage students in active learning. Students often argue that they have so many homework assignments that they don’t have time to think about the content of the texts they receive as homework.
- A typical homework assignment is one in which students have to listen to or read a paragraph or two and then answer one or two constructed-response or multiple-choice questions. In their counseling sessions, students often say they try to answer the questions without paying deep attention to the content of the passages. According to many students, they only listen to the passage or read it one or two times and just try to answer the questions without being sure whether their responses are correct or incorrect.

- In the current environment, especially during the third semester, students are highly dependent on their instructors. During the third semester, although teachers are encouraged to prepare their own learning materials, still there are several books (Newspaper book, Farsi Book, Colloquial book) that are part of the weekly schedule and need to be covered first. Therefore, students spend most of their time working based on the weekly schedule either in the classroom with their teachers' help or alone at home. According to the Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization (DES) statement (2011), "In order to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of language training at the DLIFLC, there is a need to explore best practices for out-of-class learning, including both assigned homework and students' self-directed learning activities outside of the formal classroom" (p. 1).

Types of Homework Assignments

Based on the temporary homework guidance provided, each teaching team develops and designs different types of homework assignments (Table 1) for their students. Usually, most of these assignments are task-based, such as multiple-choice (MC), constructed-response (CR), fill-in-the-blanks, translation, transcription, and some other assignments such as a written report on a cultural topic.

Although these types of assignments aim to help students attain required objectives, some of the assignments appear to fail to serve the purpose of affecting students' learning because they do not engage them in the process of learning. For example, when students receive a passage to translate and must spend hours looking up the meaning of unknown words, simply using Google's Translation Machine program

saves time. This approach obviously can't help students get deeply engaged in the learning process. Similarly, homework with a MC task seems to be unable to deeply engage students in the process of learning, especially when most of the MC tasks don't really make students think. Most of the students say that they read the choices first, then take a quick look at the text or listen one or two times to the audio text and, wrong or right, mark one of the choices without understanding the content of the passage. Although the MC questions are usually used to measure students' comprehension, students' selection of the correct answer does not necessarily mean that they understand the content of the passage, especially when they are not otherwise required to demonstrate their understanding.

Table 1 shows the most common types of homework assignments used by teaching teams at the UPF School in the third semester.

Table 1

Types of Homework

Common Types of Homework Used at UPF School		
Listening	Reading	Research
Transcription	Translation	Short oral presentation (5 minutes)
Fill-in-the-blanks	Fill-in-the-blanks	Short written paper (1-2 paragraphs)
Summary of a reading passage	Summary of a listening passage	Summary of research findings (1 Paragraph)
Multiple-choice (MC)	Multiple-choice (MC))	Report of a news event (5 minutes)
Constructed-response (CR)	Constructed-response (CR)	Summary of a social event [picnic, field trip, New Year's celebration, birthday party] (1 paragraph)

Theoretical Foundation

The primary theoretical foundation for addressing the impact of homework on adult language learners is andragogy theory. Andragogy theory was first introduced by Knowles (1950) and goes beyond memorization. This theory seeks deeper learning through involving the learner in the process of learning. This theory is interested in what mechanism adults need to identify, assess, and evaluate new information.

Through the adult learning model, students will gain a deeper knowledge and develop a better understanding of the target country, people, culture, tradition, history, economy, military, etc. Knowles (1950) pointed out in his book, *Informal Adult Education*, that, “Teaching is a process of guided interaction between the teacher, the student, and the materials of instruction; the teacher’s function is to guide the student into the kind of experiences that will enable him to develop his own natural potentialities” (p. 1). “Knowles’ idea attracted most adult educators during the last few decades. Knowles’ dialogue, debate, and subsequent writings related to andragogy have been a healthy stimulant to some of the growth in the adult education field during the past thirty years” (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990, p. 1).

According to Smith (2002, p. 1), “Andragogy as a system of ideas, concepts, and approaches to adult learning was introduced to adult educators in the United States by Malcolm Knowles. His contributions regarding andragogy influenced the thinking of countless educators of adults.” During the last three decades, the idea of andragogy gradually became more popular in the USA, and as a result educational institutions, educators, and teachers paid more serious attention to it.

Knowles (1950) believed that “adults most likely are self-directed, motivated, mature, independent, feel responsibility, and have a desire to learn and to be able to take care of their problems” (p. 1). “In many ways the pedagogical model does not account for such developmental changes on the part of adults, and thus produces tension, resentment, and resistance in individuals” (Knowles, 1950); however, it is hard to believe that adults, despite their developmental changes, completely lose their childish ways and may not enjoy learning through playing interesting games.

Carlson (1989) wrote that Knowles (1950) in his book, *In Modern Practice*, explained that “At its best an adult learning experience should be a process of self-directed inquiry, with the resources of the teacher, fellow students, and materials being available to the learner but not imposed on him” (p. 5). This book, as Carlson (1989) described it, is an exploration of “A comprehensive theory that will give coherence, consistency, and technological direction to adult-education practice” (p. 5).

Knowles (1950) adopted the following seven steps regarding the andragogy model for facilitating adults’ learning:

- set a cooperative learning climate,
- create mechanisms for mutual planning,
- arrange for a diagnosis of learner needs and interests,
- enable the formulation of learning objectives based on the diagnosed needs and interests,
- design sequential activities for achieving the objectives,

- execute the design by selecting methods, materials, and resources, and evaluate the quality of the learning experience while re-diagnosing needs for further learning.

The following tables developed by Whitmyer (1999) summarize the differences between the pedagogy and andragogy models.

Table 2

Underlying Assumptions

Topic	Traditional Pedagogy	Adult Learning
Learners/employees	Dependent	Independent
Subject matter	One right way	Many ways
Motivation to learn, change, or improve	External, dictated by others	Internal, response to personal/career needs
Role of experience	Unimportant or even discounted	A rich resource that can be the basis for learning, change or improvement Must be integrated
Learner/employee self-concept	Need outside direction	Capable of self-direction
Learning orientation	Subject-centered Logic-oriented	Life/career-centered Process-centered
Objective	Minimum requirements	Self-betterment
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Table 3

Consequent Learning Design

Topic	Traditional Pedagogy	Adult Learning
Instructional Design	Transmission of prescribed subject matter through lectures, Socratic dialogue, and memorization	Subject matter is life-centered, task-centered, and problem-centered, and learning is facilitated, self-reflective and transformative
Learning Process	Passive learning Instruction, memorization, modeling, demonstration, coaching, etc.	Active Learning Critical and reflective thinking, shared visioning. Simulations through team learning, case studies, role playing, etc. On the job experience, new information, interpretation, practice, adaptation, and integration. Experiential learning such as creative thinking, improvisation, ropes courses, etc.
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Hypothesis

Students believe the third semester's homework assignments, as currently used, are not effective in advancing language proficiency and therefore not helpful to them.

Research Questions

RQ1: What types of homework assignments do students believe are most effective in helping them learn Persian Farsi?

RQ2: What other kinds of homework assignments would students recommend as beneficial in the third semester?

Limitations

To conduct this study, there were some limitations beyond the control of the researcher which included the following:

- The participants in this study may not be fully representative of all students in the Persian Farsi School since they were not randomly selected.
- The UPF has six departments, but the data were collected from only four departments' students because the other two departments did not have any students in the third semester at the time of data collection for this study, therefore, the results of this study may not be generalizable to the entire UPF School.
- Students were only allowed to participate in this study at the end of the class day (seventh hour). At this time of day, students are tired and in a hurry to catch up either with their military duties or to take care of their personal needs. This was especially true of those who were scheduled to participate in this study on a Friday because students may have plans for their weekend or for Friday evening

and be in a hurry to get out of the school as soon as possible and catch up with their plans.

Delimitations

- The participants in this study were male and female servicemen and women under military regulations who were studying Persian Farsi at the UPF School.
- The participants were limited to those students who, at the time of data collection, were in the third semester.
- The study was limited to the third-semester homework assignments.

Definition of Terms

The terms and keywords that will be used in this study are as follows:

Homework: "tasks assigned to students by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours" (Cooper, 1989a, p. 7).

Feedback: Feedback has different forms, however, based on students' mistakes on their homework assignments, the teacher makes constructive suggestions to help students learn from their mistakes.

Follow-up action: Teacher keeps track of students' mistakes and makes sure that they study the corrections and learn from them so that they don't make the same mistakes again.

Homework policy: "Research-based homework guidelines include assigning purposeful homework, work geared toward completion, appropriate amount, and appropriate balance involving parents" (Marzano & Pickering, 2007a).

Constructivism: Constructivism is a learning theory and based on the theory that learners are active and seek meaning. That is, they learn by doing.

DLPT5: Defense Language Proficiency Test 5 (DLPT5) is a standardized, multiple-choice test which measures general language proficiency in listening and reading.

Motivation: Motivation is a desire that causes people to behave in a certain way to reach their goal(s).

OPI: According to the DLI's *Tester Certification Workshop Training Manual* (DLIFLC, 2005), "OPI" refers to the "Oral Proficiency Interview rating scale and assessment" (p. xi) that assesses an examinee's speaking ability by requiring him or her to converse in the language.

Purposeful Homework: Refers to homework that has at its purpose to improve learner perception of the learning process and to encourage learners to reach their potential.

Effective Homework: Effective homework is a well-designed task or set of tasks that is effective in helping students reach learning objectives assuming, of course, that they do the homework.

Significance of the Study

This study provided useful information about students' opinions regarding the relative effects of different types of homework assignments on their learning. Learning about the most effective types of homework assignments will allow instructors to better design task-based, homework assignments. Students' feelings and opinions about the effectiveness of different types of homework assignments will provide valuable information to be used to develop more practical homework guidance that all instructors in the UPF School can follow. It is hoped that the findings of this study will help teaching teams 1) improve their communication of ideas and the sharing of materials

through sharing ideas and homework materials, and 2) attain some degree of uniformity in providing effective homework assignments as well as in all other work-related areas.

The findings of this study will increase instructors' motivation by encouraging them to develop effective homework assignments for their students. It is hoped that the findings will help teachers to adopt a positive attitude towards collaboration and the sharing of information and experiences with one another. The outcome of this study will provide information regarding students' opinions about effective homework assignments for the school administrators as well. The findings of the study will demonstrate the benefit of constructive feedback on student homework and follow-up instructional activities designed to remedy student deficiencies.

Effective homework assignments such as task-based homework that requires students to search for information on their own instead of just completing a teacher-prepared assignment in which they only answer MC or CR questions will provide excellent opportunities for students to become involved in deeper learning and will stimulate their interest in knowledge about the target language by searching for further information on their own, becoming more independent learners, and enlarging their vocabulary knowledge. Building vocabulary knowledge will facilitate comprehension of the content of the final tests as well.

The findings of this study will also encourage instructors, as native speakers, to share their knowledge with students. There are unlimited pieces of information, vocabulary, behavioral issues, and social aspects of the target language that instructors can share with students and involve them in interesting activities through homework assignments. For instance, instructors can use various cultural, economic, government

structures, social events, and similar topics to create interesting task-based homework assignments to stimulate students' curiosity and encourage them to seek further information. For example, students can learn about the military structure of the target country and compare it with their own. Such an activity will not only stimulate students' curiosity to learn more about the military similarities and differences between the two countries, but also expose the learners to new vocabulary as well.

Effective assignments and attractive homework topics will help students become more interested in learning about the target country, target people, and the target language. Such progress will lead students to move from being teacher-dependent learners to being self-directed and self-motivated learners and to get involved in quality learning.

Students' involvement in effective homework activities will improve their self-efficacy, and they will grow as they learn how to learn independently. Students need to be guided correctly to believe in their ability to learn the assigned language. Often students say (during official or casual counseling) that they are unable to learn a second language, and it is noted that their self-esteem is very low. Helping these kinds of students will be possible by involving them in the process of learning by stimulating their interests and guiding them to seek further information on their own instead of depending on their teachers for guidance.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview of the Literature Review

Although homework is known today as part of education, our knowledge about the use of homework in the history of education is limited; however, what is known about homework is that it has been used in America as a controversial teaching strategy during the last and current century. Based on the evidence in the history of educational development in the United States, during the 1940s the focus in education shifted toward problem solving and less attention was paid to homework. One of the effects of the cold war during the 20th century in the American educational system was the launch of *Sputnik* by the Soviet Union in the late '50s (1957) that shifted the attention of American policymakers to math and technology.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, as Cooper (2012) has explained, homework was viewed “as a symptom of needless pressure on students. In the 1980s, homework came back into favor, stimulated by the oft-cited report *Nation at Risk*, which suggested that homework was one defense against the rising tide of mediocrity in U.S. education” (p. 1). During the 1980s and 1990s the interest and favor of educators and parents increased towards homework. According to Cooper’s (2012) report about the January 2006 poll conducted by Learning Services (Associated Press 2006), despite a minority of parents who viewed homework as stressful for their children and complained about the amount of homework, “57 percent of parents thought their child was assigned about the right amount of homework, 23 percent thought it was too little, and 19 percent thought it was too much” (cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 1). Cooper’s (2012) report indicates that homework still is an issue in the American educational system and needs more improvement.

According to Flynn (2008), the findings of several studies conducted by the national Parent Teacher Association and the National Education Association (NEA) indicate that “Students who do homework appear to do better than students who don’t” (p. 1).

As indicated earlier, the purpose of this study is to elicit student’s feelings and opinions regarding the homework assignments that are used during the third semester of the UPF language course at DLI. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher will make recommendations to the UPF School about the most effective and helpful types of homework.

There are two sections in Chapter Two; the first section reviews literature relevant to the study, and the second section reviews several theories regarding the characteristics of purposeful and effective homework assignments.

Section 1: Theoretical Foundation

The importance of homework is undeniable since it is an important part of the educational curriculum. About the issue of homework, Hancock (2001) stated that homework is the concern of educators, parents, and students. He also wrote, “Most agree that the purpose of homework should be to further facilitate learning, promote the development of strong study and organizational skills, and encourage students to become self-disciplined and independent learners” (p. 1).

Homework topics must be interesting enough to encourage adult learners to engage in independent learning. Instructors should carefully choose the type of topics that stimulate students’ curiosity to motivate them to seek more information on their own. As McKeachie and Svinicki (2011) believe, the objective of learning should be to help students engage in a lifelong process. They state, “We want to develop interest in further

learning and provide a base of concept and skills that will facilitate further learning, thinking and appreciation” (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2011, p. 12).

The needs of the DLIFLC’s students have been acknowledged institute-wide. On April 24, 2012, the provost of the Defense Language Institute, Dr. Donald Fischer, delivered a speech in the auditorium of the UPF School in which he encouraged faculty members to follow up on the feedback that they give on students’ homework and teach their students based on their needs while preparing them for the challenging DLPT5.

Research findings indicate that adults are self-motivated learners. Even when their participation in learning is a job requirement, the benefits of learning job-related knowledge will play an important role in their motivation. Nevertheless, for the most part, in educational settings adults’ motivation depends on the quality of the program they receive. That is, if educational programs are carefully designed and implemented, students will more likely be encouraged to take learning seriously. In completing the 2011 ESQ, a student wrote: “I feel that a key factor in my inability to progress as projected in this course was due to disorganization which led to much more stress than expected. Pace and content were not properly matched for efficient instruction” (p. 24).

When homework is effective and students are interested in the topic, they will realize that their time is not being wasted and that what they are learning is beneficial to them. When the teaching materials and instructors’ expertise fulfill adults’ expectations and meet their needs and interests, their intrinsic motivation will increase, their inner satisfaction will be achieved, and they will work harder and become better learners. A successful institution offers programs that fit students’ needs; an effective program provides useful learning materials for adult learners; an experienced, skillful and

motivated facilitator improves students' motivation through facilitating the learning process and guiding them to achieve their goals. "Homework places demands on students that help them to develop mental skills such as concentration, following directions, organizing materials, solving problems, and working independently" (Hancock, (2001).

To make homework more effective, homework assignments should be related to what students learn in class. For example, if students are studying the passive voice during school hours, homework should be related to the passive voice. "Homework provides reinforcement, practice, application, transference, and enrichment of what is taught in class and requires students to integrate skills included in curricula" (Hancock, 2001, p. 8).

Before sending students home with a homework assignment, the teacher should explain the key points of the assigned topic to equip the students with useful background knowledge to help them not only have a better understanding of the assigned task(s), but also to increase their interest, curiosity, and willingness to learn more about the topic rather than just focus on completing the assignment. This key information from their instructors will help students to be better prepared and excited to learn more about the topic on their own and complete their homework assignments as well. For instance, there is very interesting information available on the Internet that instructors can incorporate in homework assignments and encourage students to learn more about the homework topics that they assign to them. Zhao (1997) argues that "using the Internet materials can bring context-rich linguistic and cultural materials to the learner. The Internet enables the learner to access authentic news and literature in the target language" (p. 14).

The instructor should carefully choose the type of topics that stimulate students' curiosity to motivate them to seek more information on their own. As McKeachie and Svinicki (2011) stated, "the concern is to help students in a lifelong process. We want to develop interest in further learning and provide a base of concept and skills that will facilitate further learning, thinking and appreciation" (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2011, p. 12).

Homework should be used as a teaching technique to guide students to engage in more practice and master the objective of every day's lesson. The instructor can provide a democratic learning environment in class to allow students to discuss their opinions about the topic and content of the homework and to try to help each other achieve better understanding through collaborative learning. In its report, *What research says about the value of homework*, the Center for Public Education (2007) stated that, "based on a general agreement among teachers, practice, preparation, extension, and integration are specific purposes of homework" (cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 4). The Center for Public Education (2007), as cited by Flynn (2008, p. 4) has reported that "Quantity of assigned homework is less important to achievement than the amount of homework that is consistently completed by a student" (p. 4)

The use and practice of homework still is an issue in the American educational system that has its proponents and opponents among educators and those involved in education. The opponents of homework argue that supporting evidence of the benefit of homework is not strong enough. Kohn (2007b), who is cited by Flynn (2008), stated that "the primary sources do not support the claim that homework is beneficial" (p. 8). In contrast, proponents of homework like Bempechat and Hallam (2004), who are cited by

Flynn (2008), stated that “Homework advocates have long contended that homework can promote the development of academic skills related to learning and performance and, as a pedagogical principle, plays a critical role in the long-term development of achievement motivation” (p. 5). Cooper, Valentine, Nye, and Lindsay (1999) as cited by Flynn (2008), pointed out that “forming a positive identification with school through extra-curricular activities can positively influence academic performance” (p. 5). Marzano and Pickering (2007b), also according to Flynn (2008), suggested that “educators can and should continue to assign homework that is well thought out and produces discernible results in student achievement. In the absence of these characteristics, homework should not be assigned simply as a matter of routine” (p. 9).

Learning a Foreign Language

Byram and Morgan (1994) assert that “language has no function independent of the context in which it is used, thus language always refers to something beyond itself” p. 31).

Learning a foreign language, over the last few decades, has been viewed differently than before. In the past, as Clouston (1997) noted, “people learned about the civilization associated with the target language through reading the literature of the TL” (p. 1). Although the opinions and attitudes of teachers, students, scholars, and educators toward the meaning of learning a foreign language have changed in recent decades, there are still some controversies among teachers and students who don’t believe that language learning is just about learning the grammar rules of the language, but as Byram et al. (1994) have noted, “language learning has to be complemented by understanding of culture-specific meanings” (p. 4). Similarly, Straub (1999) argued that “emphasizing the

role of context and the circumstances under which language can be used accurately and appropriately, fall[s] short of the mark when it comes to actually equipping students with the cognitive skills they need in a second-culture environment” (p. 2).

Despite some confusion in the minds of some people, the role of culture in learning a second language (SL) is undeniable to most scholars, teachers, leaders of educational institutions, and even governments. “The knowledge of the conventions, customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another country, is indisputably an integral part of foreign language learning, and most teachers’ goal is to incorporate the teaching of culture into the foreign language curriculum” (Thanasoulas, 2001, p. 1). Also, Benson and Voller (1997, pp. 19-25) reported that during the past 20 years, language study has moved toward constructivism and is associated with social life. That is, for the most part, culture has become a part of language teaching and learning. Likewise, Peterson (2001) argued that language should reflect culture (p. 1).

Scebold and Wallinger (2000) reported that by learning, a foreign language student will accumulate knowledge about the culture of that language (p. 27). The newsletter “*The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA, 1993, p.3)* reported that in 1993 the U.S. Department of Education supported CARLA in conducting several phases of “culture and language learning initiatives,” which included the following:

- “Setting a Research Agenda (1993-1996)
- Conducting Research on Culture Learning in the Language Classroom (1996-1999)

- Maximizing Study Abroad: Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use (1999-2003)
- Research on the Effect of Study Abroad Materials on Student Learning (2002-2006)” (p. 1).

Nowadays, with few exceptions, most institutions involved in FL teaching include culture teaching in their curriculum in order to move from isolated vocabulary and grammar learning into cultural awareness and the deeper meaning of learning a FL, and to make connections with real-life situations. That is, institutions involved in teaching FLs intend to help students gain as much insight as possible into the beliefs and other aspects of the lifestyle of the target culture. “Students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs” (Scebold & Wallinger, 2000, p. 27).

Learning isolated vocabulary without learning how and when to use it effectively and properly will not take the learner to his/her desired destination. “We cannot go about teaching a foreign language without at least offering some insights into its speakers’ culture” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 3). Chastain (1971) stated, “Although grammar books give so called genuine examples from real life, without background knowledge those real situations may be considered fictive by the learners” (p. 75). The same author argued that “providing access into cultural aspects of language and learning culture would help learners relate the abstract sounds and forms of a language to real people and places” (Chastain 1971, p. 75).

Words carry meanings that are important to the culture and beliefs of a people. Learning the accurate meaning of words, pronouncing them correctly, and using them at appropriate times and in appropriate situations are only possible through learning about the culture of the target language. In fact, the connection between words and culture is

too tight to permit them to be separated from each other. It is through cultural awareness about the TL that people will be able to effectively communicate with one another.

Cultural awareness about the TL enables language learners to realize that mutual respect of others' beliefs, dreams, opinions, and ideas is key to making connections with people and engaging in pleasant discussions and communication. Grammar rules and isolated vocabulary are too weak to carry the weight of cultural and social aspects of the TL successfully and professionally. "Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language" (Krasner, 1999, p. 1).

Teachers who teach FLs should make it clear to students that their linguistic success depends on their cultural awareness of the TL. Homework can be used as a tool to deliver cultural knowledge to the learners. Successful learning in a FL depends highly on how much emphasis teachers and students place on the cultural aspect of the TL, and on how well they connect the meaning of the words with the culture. That is, students need to learn when it is appropriate to use certain words. For example, the English pronoun "you" is used for both singular and plural forms in the English language, and there will be no problem if an employee uses the pronoun "you" while speaking to his or her supervisor, but in the Persian Farsi language there will be a problem because there are two separate forms for this pronoun. The singular form of the pronoun is "to, تو" and the plural form of the pronoun is "Shoma, شما". Friends, family members, and people who are in a close relationship with each other usually use the singular form of the pronoun "To, تو" when they speak to one another. On the other hand, "Shoma, شما" is used for both the plural form and for honoring single individuals like one's supervisor, elderly people, or people who are not in close relationship with the speaker. The cultural rule is that if, for

instance, an employee uses the pronoun “to, تو” while speaking to his or her supervisor, it would be taken as inappropriate, rude, and disrespectful to the supervisor. Thus, language learners’ awareness about these types of cultural values is essential because these values and types of behaviors are important to the target people. “We cannot go about fostering communicative competence without taking into account the different views and perspectives of people in different cultures which may enhance or even inhibit communication” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 3). If the purpose of second language learning is to learn how to communicate with the native speakers of the TL, then learning how and when to use certain words, behaviors, and even gestures must be a part of the learning materials as well.

Using types of homework that carry cultural aspects and values enables language learners to make connections with the natives and have honorable and respectful communication with them, therefore, it must be taken seriously by both teachers and students. “There is no such thing as human nature independent of culture; studying a L2, in a sense, is trying to figure out the nature of another people” (McDevitt, 2004, pp. 3-9).

The function of homework should be to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge in specific topics. As a type of out-of-class assignment, instructors can require students to study assigned topics outside of class and share what they learn with peers in class. Discussions and debates about the differences and similarities between the target culture and the culture of the students helps students think and learn about cultural values and gain cultural awareness. “In an age of post-modernism, in an age of tolerance towards different ideologies, religions, and sub-cultures, we need to understand not only the other culture but also our own culture” (Chastain, 1971, p. 75).

According to the DLIFLC's Assistant Commandant, Colonel Laura M. Ryan (2012), who wrote an article in the Spring 2012 edition of the DLIFLC's *GLOBE* magazine, teaching culture has become an important part of language teaching in this Institute. "The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center has stressed the importance of cultural training in conjunction with language learning, [and] DLIFLC's Persian Farsi faculty and staff used the occasion of Norouz to share first-hand an important celebration of their culture" (p. 1). The content of homework assignments can be cultural issues. Teachers can choose topics related to students' jobs such as the structure of military, government structure, and the economy to stimulate their curiosity and encourage them to seek further information on their own.

Homework serves different purposes; it can be used as an instrument to lead the learner into deeper learning. To create a deeper learning opportunity through homework assignments, instructors can ask students to write a simple and brief reflection on a cultural topic discussed in class and to speak briefly from notes and share their understanding with their peers. As McKeachie and Svinicki (2011) have noted, "Interactions that facilitate learning need not be limited to those with teachers; often, those with peers are more productive" (p. 192).

Valqui (2001) argues that, "teachers, along with their professional lives and studies, will develop several domains such as vision, motivation, knowledge, reflection, practice, and context" (p. 3). The same author explains that such development happens because of sophisticated interactions at school. Fairclough (1992), who was cited by Valqui (2001), stated, "successful teachers have the ability to create equal opportunity for their students and help them build a better future" (p. 5). "Vision includes a clear

ultimate goal of optimal instruction and seeing students as capable individuals” (Valqui, 2001, p. 5).

One of the most powerful and energetic advantages that accomplished teachers have is strong motivation and its relation to their emotion and passion in teaching. “Emotions give energy and meaning to teachers’ visions, understandings, and practices” (Valqui, 2001, p. 5). It is commonplace in education to say that people who join the teaching profession do so motivated by a desire to change the world” (Valqui, 2001, p. 10). VanManen (1991), who is cited by Valqui (2001), argues that there are four types of reflection that teachers engage in such as “anticipatory” or planning, “active/interactive” or thinking while teaching, “Recollective” or learning from past events for future use, and “mindfulness” or knowledge about pedagogy, and “knowing the right ways of acting in teaching after an extended history of engagement in reflection” (Valqui, 2001, p. 10). For instance, teachers must have lesson plan(s) before entering the classroom, and when they leave the classroom they should ask themselves whether they have made a difference in students’ understanding and knowledge of the target language. Instructors need to make a connection between the information from the past and the students’ present life situation to make the new information practical.

One of the purposes of homework should be to diagnose students’ learning problems and to provide them with necessary feedback that can help them solve their learning problems. To diagnose students’ learning problems, an instructor can collect homework assignments, make corrections, give feedback, and take follow-up actions to make sure that they study the feedback and do not repeat the same mistakes in their next assignments. Homework certainly should not be used as a punishment tool or a device

for keeping students busy and making them sacrifice all of their leisure time. Teachers should keep in mind that students have other responsibilities that are important to them and they need some time to take care of their personal and social interests as well. Instructors need to remember that adults' time is very limited, therefore, they should not load their students down with a large amount of homework. Mauldin and Campbell (2002), who are cited by Wlodkowski (2008), reported that "Many studies have found time constraints to be a major obstacle to participation in adult education" (p. 240).

According to Wlodkowski (2008), teachers should pay attention to adult students' complaints about the amount of homework and recognize the nature of their complaints because the reason for their complaints may not be that they are lazy, but that the amount of homework is actually excessive and they estimate the time they have available and want to know if they have enough time to complete their assignments. "We need to understand the type of learners we have and the amount of time they can realistically afford before we create our course and training requirements" (Wlodkowski, 2008, pp. 64-65).

Although the quantity of homework depends on what is covered in class on a given day, the time spent on homework should be realistically estimated to make it practical. Cooper (1989) believes that spending too much time on completing homework assignments will generate a lack of interest in learners and even make them bored. Hancock (2001) stated that "Overloading students with homework does not stop with causing frustration in students, but generates the bad habit of not doing homework as well" (p. 8).

Characteristics of Adult Learners

Teaching adults is different from teaching young children. Adult learners are self-directed and usually have a purpose. They like to use what they learn in their personal and/or professional lives. “Teachers should actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators” (Lieb, 1991, p. 1). Teachers who recognize that adults are experienced learners, carry background information, and are capable of taking responsibility for their learning, are more successful in guiding their students. That is, instead of using materials that adults may not be interested in, instructors can choose learning materials that interest them. To do so, teachers should learn about students’ background knowledge and then connect it to the lesson objectives. Lieb (1991) noted that the adult teacher’s role is serving as a facilitator for the learners (p. 1).

Adult learners are aware of the time they invest in their learning and usually want to use their time wisely. Because of their life experiences and knowledge, adults are critical of the materials they use to learn. Based on their background knowledge and experiences, adults evaluate the quality of learning materials and like to be convinced that the learning materials are useful for them. To be effective, educational programs such as homework assignments need to be carefully designed and implemented by skillful facilitators who can meet their needs without wasting their time. “Adults have accumulated a foundation of *life experiences* and *knowledge* that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. They need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base” (Lieb, 1991, p. 1). The same author believes that in order to demonstrate the importance of experience in learning, facilitators should use participants’ experiences and relate them to the homework materials. “Part of being

an effective instructor involves understanding how adults learn best. Compared to children and teens, adults have special needs and requirements as learners” (Lieb, 1991, p. 1). According to the same author, having a strong reason for learning is a general tendency among adults. Lieb (1991) suggested that prior to starting courses for adults, facilitators should be aware of the course objectives to be able to connect them with the prior experiences of their adult learners (p. 1). “Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them” (Lieb, 1991, p. 1). Similarly, Wlodkowski (2008) stated that learning about adults prior to the first class meeting gives the instructor the opportunity to adjust the teaching materials to the needs of the learner (p. 46).

Educational programs that are designed based on adult learners’ goals attract them more and can even generate stronger motivation. “Instructors must show participants how this class will help them attain their goals” (p. 1). It is extremely important for adults to understand that the homework assignments are related to their goals or in most cases to their occupations because their interest in learning may just be for job improvement. “Instructors must tell participants explicitly how the lesson will be useful to them on the job” (Lieb, 1991, p. 1).

Showing respect for adult learners’ life experience is very important as well, and instructors should allow learners to feel free to express their ideas and opinions about the issues discussed in class. “Taking some time in the beginning of a course to hear comments and suggestions from learners regarding the course objectives shows our respect for the learners and their experience and perspective” (Wlodkowski, 2008, p. 64). Based on his eight years of hands-on experience with adult learners, this researcher

believes that a respectful learning environment is a powerful encouraging factor that instructors can use to increase students' motivation. If the learning environment becomes supportive of students' opinion and is nonjudgmental, students will feel more comfortable to participate in class activities and take their out-of-class assignments more seriously. "Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom. These adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class" (Lieb, 1991, p 2).

The fears of being wrong or making mistakes can cause students to pull back and become passive in class activities and lose their interest in doing their homework assignments. Instructors who are not aware of such a mental struggle will likely find it difficult to create exciting and effective homework that can increase students' motivation. Lack of such awareness will take an excellent opportunity away from students to become motivated learners.

Motivation

People may have different motives for learning a foreign language (FL). Some may want to develop better communication skills in the FL; others may seek to overcome the language barrier to express their ideas to people whom they meet from different cultures. The interest in learning more about other cultures has been a motivating factor for many people to learn a FL as well. Some groups of people or communities show special interest in learning foreign languages just to have a better understanding of the world. Governments require their military personnel to learn foreign languages for

military purposes. Certain individuals become even more engaged with the FL and pursue careers as translators, interpreters, or teachers.

If the teaching materials, homework assignments, and instructors' expertise and knowledge fulfill students' expectations and meet their needs and interests, their intrinsic motivation will increase because of their inner satisfaction, and they may even work harder and become better learners.

Motivation has been defined by Brewster and Fager (2000) as: "students' willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in the learning process" (Cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 20).

Institutions and facilitators in charge of implementing adult programs should bear in mind that adult learners' motivation could be affected in both positive and negative ways depending on the type of program and instructional strategies used during the course. A successful institution offers programs that fit students' needs; an effective program provides useful learning materials, and an experienced, skillful, and motivated instructor improves adult learners' motivation through facilitating the learning process and guiding them to achieve their goals. Keith and Cool (1992) stated that the "Results of a path analysis examining motivation and quality of instruction indicate that motivation affects achievement, although indirectly through variables such as coursework and homework" (Cited by Flynn 2008, p. 20). Brewster & Fager (2000) who are cited by Flynn (2008) stated, "Motivating students includes teacher-generated activities that appeal to the psychological and intellectual needs of students to accommodate competency, connection with others, autonomy, originality, and self-expression" (p. 20); and Flynn (2008) believes "assignments that will generate these kinds of responses

include moving students through the right combination of that will engage and pique their interest and curiosity but be of sufficient mixture not to frustrate, disinterest, or lead to assignment incompleteness” (p.20). Furthermore, the same author, by citing Trueworthy (2006), continues that “meaningful application, that is, using concepts that are meaningful to students’ own lives contributes to student homework success” (p. 20). Koechlin and Zwaan (2007) believe that one of the strongest motivation strategies would be to help students understand the close relationship between effort and achievement. Flynn (2008) believes that students should be allowed to participate “in establishing assessment criteria” because it will help them to contribute to the growth of “responsibility for learning” (p. 20).

Lieb (1991) recognized that motivation is one of the strongest characteristics of adult learners and suggested six factors that play an important role in their learning (p. 2). These factors that, according to the author, motivate people to learn are as follows:

- **“Social relationships:** to make new friends, to meet a need for associations and friendships.
- **External expectations:** to comply with instructions from someone else; to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of someone with formal authority.
- **Social welfare:** to improve the ability to serve mankind, prepare for service to the community, and improve the ability to participate in community work.
- **Personal advancement:** to achieve higher status in a job, secure professional advancement, and stay abreast of competitors.
- **Escape/Stimulation:** to relieve boredom, provide a break in the routine of home or work, and provide a contrast to other exacting details of life.

- **Cognitive interest:** to learn for the sake of learning, seek knowledge for its own sake, and to satisfy an inquiring mind.”

Motivating factors, as Lieb (1991, p. 2) noted, can become barriers for adult learners as well. For example, improving skills because of job requirements and learning new knowledge, or the need to learn and adapt to changes in a company may not always be easy for adults to deal with; therefore, such motivating factors, as Lieb (1991, p. 2) noted, may become a problem. Lieb (1991) has mentioned that “Some of these barriers include lack of time, money, confidence, interest, lack of information about opportunities to learn, scheduling problems, "red tape," and problems with child care and transportation” (p. 2). Other problems that relate to adults’ responsibilities in life are the challenges of balancing learning requirements with other obligations that they have, such as taking care of family needs, or dealing with their limited time and managing to spend enough time to complete their homework assignments; therefore, instructors should assign effective homework assignments to encourage students to do them. Bempechat (2004), who is cited by Flynn (2008), said that homework is realized to play a “critical role in the growth and advancement of achievement motivation by providing opportunities for students to cultivate time-management, independent problem-solving capability, internal locus of control, self-directed learning, and strategic benefit for coping with mistakes and challenging materials” (p. 21).

Instructors can play an important role in preventing learning barriers by employing strategies that can successfully increase adults’ motivation. For example, as Lieb (1991) suggested, instructors should be aware of their students’ reason(s) for enrollment (p. 3). “A successful strategy includes showing adult learners the relationship

between training and an expected promotion” (Lieb, 2011, p. 2). A skillful instructor should be able to use positive reinforcement, provide students with interesting homework assignments, and engage them in learning activities to stimulate their curiosity. Lambert and McCombs (1998), who were cited by Wlodkowski (2008, p. 19), stated that psychological research studies show that one of the characteristics of human nature is curiosity which, together with being active and making sense of life, generates motivation. Bempechat (2004) believes that the role of homework in student growth and motivation is critical. “Providing opportunities for students to cultivate time-management, organization skills, independent problem-solving capability, internal locus of control, self-directed learning, and strategic benefit for coping with mistakes and challenging materials” (cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 21).

A successful instructor carefully develops assignments that are encouraging to students. Experienced facilitators are able to successfully create equal learning opportunity that allows students to freely express their feelings and understanding of the subject matter. It is important for instructors to realize that “inappropriate assignments, heavy load, and assignments for which the purpose is not clearly explained by the teacher or understood by the student can have negative effects of decreasing student motivation as well. Generating a democratic learning environment will increase adults’ motivation and engage them in more active participation. “As instructors, we need to pay close attention to the emotions of adult learners and construct with them a learning environment that supports the optimal expression of their emotions in service of their learning” (Wlodkowski, 2008, p. 19).

Research findings indicate that students' perception affects their motivation and attitude. Taha (2007), who is cited by Flynn (2008), stated that "General perception of the usefulness of the foreign language to their future careers may also be a motivational factor in language learning" (pp. 21-22). Based on Huntsinger and Cooper's (1999) findings in a study on school-age students, most of the students found homework helpful. The same authors reported that students who did homework at an early school age developed better psychological adjustment at a later age. These results indicate that there is a link between students' efforts and their motivation which will result in achievement. Trautwein, Kastens and Koller (2006) pointed out that "Intrinsic value is a better predictor of homework effort in older students. Intrinsic value is believed to be related to self-regulation that underlies the student motivational processes to complete homework requirements (cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 22).

Another motivational factor appears to be a student's self-efficacy, or ability to manage his or her learning strategy effectively. Based on personal experience and first-hand observation, the author believes that adult students who have clear goals and are highly motivated are among the most successful students. These students normally develop their own learning strategy, study regularly, complete every day's homework assignments, and are always up to date with the objectives of every day's lessons. "Self-efficacy, referring to the belief in one's ability to use self-monitoring strategies to master learning materials effectively, seems to be an important factor in motivational constructs" (Flynn, 2008, p. 22).

One of the most powerful tools that teachers can use to increase students' motivation is to give them feedback on their homework. Feedback can provide

correction on specific errors that students make. Motivated students show great appreciation of the constructive feedback that they receive from their instructors. Students' efforts to study the corrections and to learn from their mistakes results in fewer errors on their next assignment and gives their instructors the feeling that the time they spend providing feedback is not wasted. Constructive feedback on students' homework and students' effort to learn from their errors harmonizes the teaching and learning relationship between instructors and students and generates excellent academic communication from which both sides will enjoy and benefit.

“Feedback allows students to understand and learn from errors and improve their work” (Flynn, 2008, p. 24). In her review of literature on homework, Flynn (2008) reported that Zerr (2007), in research on feedback, found that immediate feedback among many types of feedback on students' homework appears to be the most effective and helpful one. Immediate feedback refers to the type of feedback that teachers provide orally on a one-by-one basis. Zerr (2007), who is cited by Flynn (2008), reported that “The immediacy of feedback allowed opportunity for inserting correct application and usage [and] immediate correction opportunities were found to increase student engagement and enjoyment” (p. 24). Flynn (2008) has reported that Cardell and Corno (1981) examined “the effects of variations in written feedback on homework assignments on second language learning” (p. 25) and found that “student errors were either suppressed or made salient [criticism] in written teacher feedback” (p. 25) and as a result, the authors favor the type of “feedback on second language homework which emphasizes error salience in a constructively motivational way” (p. 25). “Salient errors (criticism) would increase performance to a greater extent than suppressed errors (praise or no

comment); and the greatest degree of performance would result from the combination of both salient and suppressed errors in written homework feedback” (Cardell & Corno, 1981, cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 25).

Homework policy plays an important role in the effectiveness of homework. Educational institutions should have reasonable policies that are workable for both teachers and students. Flynn (2008) reported that Huntsinger and Cooper (1999) believe, “To avoid negative effects, policies should accommodate the unique requirements of the students, [and] effective policy would include considerations of grade level and time spent” (Flynn, 2008, p. 26).

Homework policy needs to be well designed and implemented; it should carefully take into consideration the amount of time that instructors must spend to develop purposeful and meaningful, quality homework for students. The amount of time that students need to spend on completing their homework assignments should also be one of the concerns of policymakers to ensure that students are not overloaded with out-of-class assignments.

A well designed homework policy can help instructors provide appropriate out-of-class assignments tailored to students’ proficiency level. For example, giving long assignments, such as describing one or two full pages, to students who are learning a foreign language may not be as effective as short assignments. Wallinger (2000) reported that for beginners “short assignments which involved practice of classroom work were considered more effective than long assignments” (cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 28). Wallinger (2000), who is cited by Flynn (2008), reported from a Wisconsin Association of Foreign Language Teachers Study of 1995 “that 39 of the 40 teachers in that study

indicated that “practice homework was their number one choice” (cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 28).

Instructors can involve students in their own learning process through providing homework assignments that require some research work, either on the Internet or through interviews with native speakers. For example, if the homework task is to learn how to cook a certain type of dish, students can collect the needed information either by searching on the Internet or interviewing native speakers. This information can be arranged by creative teachers to be discussed in class, and the teacher can create an opportunity for all students to share their opinions and experiences. Teachers can engage students in communication approach through using similar topics as homework assignments and arrange students in small groups and/or pairs to work together and share the responsibility of collecting the needed information. The Communicative approach, as Flynn (2008) has described, “includes: working in pairs and small groups, taking part in projects, and practicing [the target language] by talking to their peers” (p. 29).

Section II: Definition of Homework

The findings of several research projects about the benefit of homework show that there are controversies among educators and researchers. Those who favor homework believe that homework is helpful to students and provides an extra learning opportunity for them. Opponents of homework argue that homework is nothing but a waste of learners’ time; thus, a single description that could represent both proponents and opponents of homework seems impossible; nevertheless, despite the difficulty and diversity of opinions on homework, the following neutral definition, provided by Cooper (1989a), is employed in this study. Cooper (1989a) defined homework as “tasks assigned

to students by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours" (p. 7).

Description of Homework

If homework were not thought to be important, it would not be included in curricula nor be a part of educational programs. To better understand what homework means, one can describe or interpret it as practice and exercise. If homework is taken seriously by both teachers and students so that the learners practice regularly and the instructors give constructive feedback, it will help the learners to develop required skills and lead them to their desired goal.

The life experiences of successful people demonstrate the effect of exercise and practice on learning and skill development. For example, the more a physician who is in the process of learning heart surgery practices, the more skillful and knowledgeable a heart surgeon the physician will become. Athletes, through practice and regular exercise, improve their abilities, become more skillful, and advance to a higher proficiency level. Wlodkowski (2008) argued that learners who practice seriously will definitely achieve their desired goals (p. 189).

In any aspect of life, systematic practice and regular engagement with learning objectives lead individuals or groups to a level of expertise and professionalism. A mechanic who repairs cars and becomes proficient at fixing a car's transmission needs to practice to reach a professional level. Registered nurses practice in hospitals to gain necessary knowledge and develop the skills required to professionally take care of patients and perform nursing tasks. Language learners, too, need systematic practice to learn all aspects of a second language such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation,

fluency, as well as culture in order to develop language skills at desired proficiency levels. None of these skills can be achieved if the learner does not practice regularly; therefore, reaching a given proficiency level in a second language requires regular and systematic practice. “For a new skill to become automatic or for new knowledge to become long-lasting and sustained, practice is necessary” (Marzano, 2001, p. 4). Adult learners, regardless of what their learning objective or goal may be, whether to become a heart surgeon, mechanic, professional athlete, or language learner, need to follow the same path in order to develop professional skills.

The above examples show that learning is associated with practice. Based on their experience and knowledge, experts in each profession develop specific guidelines to be practiced by learners. Professors at medical schools ask students to practice in hospitals in order to become skillful in their profession. The same situation applies to nursing students, more or less. They are also required to practice and learn how to meet their job requirements in order to be certified as a registered nurse. Athletes will train to gradually build up the skills they need to become professional athletes. An experienced transmission mechanic guides a trainee until the required skills are achieved. In education, teachers suggest certain out-of-class activities and provide necessary exercises for students to help them gradually improve the desired language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Since all of these professions require a certain type of practice, each of them has its own name. For example, practice for a surgeon and a nurse is called “internship,” or practice for a car mechanic and athlete is called “training,” and the name of practice in education is “homework.”

As internships and training need to be relevant to the learners' goals; homework also needs to be related to the objectives of the course. Instructors who develop homework for adult learners must remember that adults are pragmatic learners, therefore, the homework assignments that they provide for students must respond to their needs. "They want their learning to help them solve problems, build new skills, advance in their jobs, make more friends, or decide something that is of real value to them" (Wlodkowski, 2008, p. 51).

Purposeful Homework

Knowledge of adults' goals and purposes for learning enables instructors to connect the learning materials such as homework assignments to their purpose. According to Hancock (2001), "When students see that the purpose of a homework assignment is helpful to them and they are interested in the topic, they are more likely to do the assignment" (p. 8). Through his research on the brain, Wlodkowski (2008) also found that, "When adults can see that what they are learning makes sense and is important according to their values and perspective, their motivation emerges" (p. 19).

Hancock (2001) stated that the benefits of any homework assignment should be apparent to students. According to Deveau (2007), a purposeful homework assignment should be well designed and maintain a high degree of motivation and, at the same time, it should challenge learners at their ability level. Purposeful homework tends to improve adults' perception of the entire learning process and encourages them to reach their potential. "Purposeful homework aligned to the objectives of the course can improve the achievement of the student as well as the relationship between home and school work" (Deveau, 2007, p.1).

An ongoing assessment of students' improvement should be conducted through purposeful homework. Teachers provide assignments to be completed at home and the next day the instructor can assess the students' learning by checking their work and giving them feedback. Furthermore, according to the neuroscientific perspective, it is necessary for adult learners to receive feedback from their instructors because, according to Zull (2002), "Feedback about one's learning and behavior significantly contributes to one's sense of control and is vital to intrinsic motivation and improving learning" (Wlodkowski, 2008, p. 20).

Several research findings indicate that the best results can be achieved by matching homework assignments with the learner's ability and the materials taught in the classroom. "The information used in the homework will complement the activity-based work done in the classroom" (Zavatto, et al, 2005, p. 1).

Understanding the value of purposeful homework in the learning process not only helps instructors to design suitable homework for the best use of adults' time, but it also helps learners to use their time wisely, think critically about the learning materials, and gain deeper understanding. Students' performance and learning quality can be improved if homework tends to stretch students' learning ability further. Homework assignments should assure adult learners that their time spent on homework is not wasted and make sure that they realize they learn something that they didn't know before. This assurance will take the fear away from adult learners and, as Wlodkowski (2008) said, it is important for adults to know how to distance themselves from fear toward pleasure (p. 17).

Homework assignments should carry all of the above qualities in order to help adult learners feel capable of learning new knowledge, satisfied with the quality of the homework, and comfortable completing the assignments. “The most helpful homework assignments are carefully planned by teachers and have direct meaning to students” (Hancock, 2001, p. 4).

Homework assignments should target certain grammar points, include new terminology taught during the class session, be related to the topic studied in the classroom, carry interesting content, match students’ linguistic ability as well as challenge learners in a positive manner. Observations made by Zavatto (2005) make it clear that an excellent way of expanding any learning program and integrating all areas of curriculum is possible through the process of assigning helpful homework.

Working on what is being taught every day and practicing on the materials which are discussed in the classroom enable students to understand the objectives of the lesson and learn, therefore, it is important to develop homework assignments that provide opportunity for more practice on what has been taught in class. Homework should have the quality of stretching learners’ abilities to their maximum learning capacity. “Students could complete more practice and review work at home or expand their experiences in authentic ways” (Hancock, 2001, p. 4).

Facilitators who carefully prepare meaningful out-of-class assignments usually tend to provide an opportunity for students to do more practice at home and become ready for the next day’s class session. “Well designed homework assignments relate directly to what is being taught in the classroom and extend students’ learning beyond the

classroom; and student achievement rises significantly when teachers regularly assign meaningful homework and students conscientiously do it” (Hancock, 2001, p. 7).

Findings of several studies show that effective homework assignments are those that include simple tasks. “Students should not be expected to teach themselves complex skills at home” (Hancock, 2001, p. 7). Assignments that are designed for homework should provoke thought and interest in students, therefore, homework that generates such thoughts and interest will encourage learners to take on more challenging assignments.

Out-of-class assignments should be focused on an area of knowledge or skill where more practice is needed. This includes the fact that sometimes the materials taught a few weeks earlier should be included in homework assignments to activate past information in students’ memories. Willingham (2002) stated that “Homework assignments should include material taught in previous weeks and even months. Research results using the spacing effect show greater dividends years later when skills are reviewed in a delayed condition” (p. 5).

Effective Homework

Effective homework is a well-designed task or set of tasks that is effective in helping students reach learning objectives, assuming of course that they do the homework. According to Cooper (2008, p. 8), effective homework has immediate academic effects on students’ learning as well as long-term academic effects on students’ achievement. In her literature review of homework, Flynn (2008) stated that “to be effective, homework must be a serious, carefully designed, implemented, and assessed endeavor that is associated with teacher training and balance” (p. 9). The same author explained that the major factors that influence the effectiveness of homework are “length

of time, completion, level of difficulty, purpose, appropriateness or quality, learning style considerations, skill area utilized, degree of individualization, linkage to performance measures, student perception of value, submission requirements, teacher feedback, clarity and avoidance of confusing or frustrating assignments” (Flynn, 2008, p. 12).

One of the factors that influences the effect of homework on student achievement is the amount of time that a student spends completing his or her assignments. Based on his findings in several studies on homework effectiveness, Cooper (1989b) has stated that there is no association between the amount of time that students spend on homework and grades. “It is better to give small amounts of homework that a teacher can handle and check, rather than larger assignments that go unmonitored” (Sullivan & Sequeira, 1996, p. 347).

According to Brewster and Fager (2000), the US Department of Education has set a guideline for homework to limit the maximum time that students should spend completing their homework task(s); based on this guideline, the estimated time that students should spend on completing a homework assignment is 1 ½ hours per night. Brewster and Fager (2000), who are cited by Flynn (2008), provided a list of elements that relate to the effectiveness of homework such as “communication of expectations, consistency in doing homework, clear communication of a clear purpose for each assignment, consideration of appropriate time involved, ensuring a variety of assignments, and successful, timely evaluation, or appropriate, timely feedback” (p. 13). Trautwein et al. (2006) believe that having to spend lots of time completing homework can cause a motivational problem; that is, instead of being more encouraged and

motivated to take homework seriously and do it, students will lose interest and fail to make an effort to complete it.

Although many researchers and educators believe that the time spent completing out-of-class assignments is associated with the effectiveness of homework, actually, it is consistency in completing homework that makes homework effective. Unclear tasks will confuse students and cause incomplete homework. Instructors need to clarify homework task(s) and prevent any misunderstanding on the part of students to encourage them to regularly complete their homework assignments. “Homework must be structured in such a way that students can accomplish it with relatively high success rates, so that they will complete all or large portions of the homework” (Marzano & Pickering, 2007b, cited by Flynn, 2008, p. 14).

Flynn (2008) believes that “homework assignments have a start and a finish and require close communication between teachers and students to be effective” (p. 18). Leahy (2002), who is cited by Flynn (2008), said that “Teachers are the other part of the homework. They are responsible [to provide] appropriate and useful feedback. This teacher-component factor of assigning homework makes significant demands on their time as well as on their skills” (p. 18).

Proper communication between teacher and students, as Flynn (2008) stated, “lies at the heart of considerations of homework” (p. 18). Bada and Okan (2000), who are cited by Flynn (2008), based on research conducted in Turkey on the learning styles of 230 students who were learning English language found that a “cooperative need was very important for greater communication between teachers and students” (p. 18). About the importance of teacher-student communication, Flynn (2008) further explained that “these important topical areas related to foreign language learning would be the first

place to start in any serious assessment of learning environment” (p. 19). Based on several research findings, cooperative and collaborative work between teacher and students was emphasized greatly by Flynn (2008) who suggested that the teacher’s own attitude toward homework has a strong influence on student attitude, therefore, “without a comprehensive understanding of the importance of the teacher’s own attitude about homework and the teacher’s considerable contribution to effective feedback—homework will not be effective” (Flynn, 2008, p. 20).

According to Hancock (2001), effective homework should neither appear to be similar to class work nor teach new skills; instead it must be designed to back up the information taught in the classroom; and educational institutions need to have policies to monitor the type of homework students receive. Based on several research findings, cultural context (thoughts, opinions, and feelings that result from experiences) is taken into consideration for teaching adults and facilitating their learning. Brookfield (1993) suggested that adult learning can be more effective if it is relevant to adults’ cultural perspectives (beliefs, values, attitudes, behavior, etc.).

According to Brookfield (1993), it is important to consider that there are significant differences between adults and children (p. 20). The same author explained further that understanding these differences is even more important than “the differences of class, culture, ethnicity, personality, cognitive style, learning patterns, life experiences, and gender” (p. 20). “When adults care about what they are learning and know they are becoming more effective at what they value by means of that learning, their intrinsic motivation surfaces like a cork rising through water” (Brookfield, 1993, p. 20). For example, if the task is about a historical event and the learner has no interest in history,

he or she may feel bored and stop completing the task, while a second learner who is interested in the topic will enjoy completing the same task, however a third learner, despite getting frustrated as well, may complete the task anyway. This example demonstrates that learners' response to an activity is a reflection of their cultural perspectives. Instructors need to pay attention to their adult learners' cultural perspectives and somehow connect the content of the homework assignments to their interests.

Through communication and ethical respect, the facilitator can build bridges between what adult learners know and their new homework materials. "Seeing adults as unique and active, we emphasize communication and respect, realizing that through understanding and sharing our resources we create greater energy of learning. When this is working, excellent teaching and learning is like breathing together" (Włodkowski, 2008, p. 21).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Method and Design

The purpose of this study is to learn about student's feelings and opinions regarding the homework assignments that are used during the third semester of the UPF language course at the DLI. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher will make recommendations to the UPF School about the most effective and helpful types of homework.

RQ1: What types of homework assignments do students believe are most effective in helping them learn Persian Farsi?

RQ2: What other kinds of homework assignments would students recommend as beneficial in the third semester?

The research methodology employed in this study will be qualitative, specifically the phenomenology research strategy. This strategy is focused on human experiences of a phenomenon like the homework issue in the UPF School described by previous students in the school (please see pages 2-9). The phenomenology research strategy requires that the researcher seek the opinions and feelings of participants in the study, and this is exactly what this researcher intended to do. "The researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers express in the literature" (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). In this study, the researcher sought participants' feelings and opinions about the effectiveness and helpfulness of the type of homework assignments that they receive from their teaching team during the third semester. In other words, the researcher's role in this study was to ask evaluative questions to identify the effectiveness and helpfulness

of the third semester's homework assignments based on information collected from the participants in the study. The researcher studied a sample of third-semester students that was reasonable in size (at least 30).

In the questionnaire employed in this study (please see Appendix A) participants will answer 10 open-ended questions. The survey questions focused on the effectiveness and helpfulness of the homework assignments given in the third semester.

“The process of qualitative research is largely inductive, with the inquirers generating meaning from the data collected in the field” (Creswell, 2009, p. 9). A descriptive methodology was used for this study because it enabled the researcher to seek a better understanding of the participants' perceptions about the third semester homework in order to better address the homework phenomenon by making an inductive interpretation of the collected information. “The goal of the research was to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied.

The research design was a survey of students' feelings and opinions about the type of homework assignments that they receive during the third semester from their teaching teams. The researcher used a survey with 10 open-ended questions to collect the necessary data to answer the research questions. Since the information provided by the participants in this study (participants' feelings and opinions) about the effectiveness and helpfulness of the third semester homework assignments was the key to this study, using open-ended questions made it more possible to gather deeper information from their personal feelings and opinions. In other words, the goal was to elicit deeper information from participants as much as possible.

Students were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study and were invited to sign a consent form prior to completing the survey. Participation in this study was completely voluntary; the researcher made sure that students fully understood that they would suffer no consequences if they declined to participate in the study, or if they started to fill out the questionnaire and then decided not to complete it. The survey questionnaire was anonymous. Participants took the survey during the seventh hour (the last hour of the class day); it was estimated that it would take participants about 15-20 minutes to complete the survey.

Selection of Participants

Qualitative Selection

Participants in this study were students in the Armed Forces who were assigned by their military units to study the Persian Farsi language for 48 weeks in the Basic Course at the UPF School of the DLIFLC in Monterey, California. The students were in the third semester of the course and volunteered to participate in the study and complete a survey questionnaire.

Students who were at least four to six weeks into the third semester of the course were recruited from iterations of the Basic Course taught by other instructors, not from students that the researcher has ever taught. Although the researcher is an instructor in the Persian Farsi School, he only teaches his own students who are first semester students at the time of the study.

According to Dr. Danan - member of the UPF School's SRB - all students who were at least four to six weeks into the third semester of the course were instructed to come to the UPF School's auditorium and Dr. Jackson - the head of DLI's institute-wide

SRB and a researcher - provided some introductory remarks about research at the DLI and the opportunity for students to participate therein. The researcher explained the nature of his study to the students and administer the Letter of Informed Consent. The students who volunteered to participate in the study were then be given the questionnaire to complete.

Instrumentation

The researcher designed a questionnaire (please see Appendix A) to elicit information about students' feelings and opinions regarding the effectiveness and helpfulness of the types of homework assignments that they receive during the third semester from their teaching teams. The questionnaire included 10 questions based on a Likert five-point scale (Extremely effective, Very effective, Effective, Not very effective, and extremely ineffective). Most of the questions were accompanied by extra space for explanatory comments in order to give participants the opportunity to elaborate on their opinions and explain their choices.

Data Collection Procedures

For this qualitative research the needed data was collected through a survey questionnaire. The data was collected as soon as this proposal was approved by all necessary sources at DLI (SRBs and IRB), as well as by Argosy University's IRB. A letter of approval issued by Argosy's IRB was provided to DLI's administration and likewise a letter of approval issued by DLI's IRB was provided to Argosy's principals prior to data collection.

All collected information and participants' identification was kept confidential, safe and secure in the researcher's office in a double locked drawer. The researcher also provided students with his phone number in case they had questions about the study.

The following procedures were followed in this study:

- Obtaining approval for the study from the dissertation committee chair.
- Obtaining approval for the study from both institutions involved (DLI & Argosy).
- Obtaining the informed consent of the participants in the study (the informed-consent form explained the purpose of the study and what was involved as a participant.)
- Administering the questionnaire.
- Data processing and analysis.

Data Analysis

“Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (Creswell, 2009, p. 148). The collected data was coded, organized, and analyzed to answer the research questions. Using qualitative research methodology in this study enabled the researcher to analyze the participants' opinions on the type of homework assignments that they receive during the third semester.

If necessary, the researcher could use the NVivo software that is designed for qualitative studies to evaluate participants' feelings and opinions by providing meaningful graphs, charts and tables to combine the codes into wider categories and demonstrate the findings of the study. “NVivo helps analyze, manage, shape, and analyze

qualitative data. It provides security by storing the database and files together in a single file, and it can display graphically the codes and categories” (Creswell, 2009, p. 167). All qualitative information collected through the survey questions was coded, labeled, and organized for analysis.

While requesting comments, the majority of the questionnaire items that were used in this study lent themselves to simple quantitative analyses. Since the majority of the items ask respondents to circle points on an effectiveness scale, the researcher could count and report--for each questionnaire item--the frequency with which each point on the scale was circled.

The collected data provided first-hand information about participants’ perceptions and a deep understanding of students’ experience with the third semester’s homework. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher provided a report of participants’ opinions to the school’s administration in accord with the ultimate goal of this study, to provide information that may be used to improve the effectiveness and helpfulness of the third semester homework assignments in contributing to student mastery of Persian Farsi.

CHAPTER FOUR: STATISTICAL FINDINGS

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to elicit student's feelings and opinions regarding the homework assignments that are used during the third semester of the Undergraduate Persian Farsi (UPF) language course at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLILFC). To address the research hypothesis and research questions below, information was collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was piloted with 34 third semester students before collecting the actual data for this study to test the reliability and validity of the survey questions. By the time of actual data collection (May 25-26 and June 1, 2013) those third semester students who participated in piloting had already graduated and no longer were in the UPF.

Research hypothesis

Students believe the third semester's homework assignments, as currently used, were not effective in advancing language proficiency and therefore not helpful to them.

Research Questions

RQ1: What type of homework assignments do students believe are most effective in helping them learn Persian Farsi?

RQ2: What other kinds of homework assignments would students recommend as beneficial in the third semester?

In this chapter the descriptive data collected in the study are presented in tables. A description of the population and sample, the study's findings, and interpretations of

the findings make up three major sections of the chapter. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

Demographic Data

Data for this study were collected in the UPF School. During the time of data collection (February 25-26 and March 1, 2013) the total population of third semester students was 141. The number of students who participated in this study was 108; that is, nearly 76.6% of the total third semester population volunteered to participate in this study which gave high external validity to the findings of the study. All participants signed a letter of informed consent (see Appendix B) and filled out the researcher's questionnaire (see Appendix A). Table 4 below describes the population and sample of the study, by department and overall.

Table 4

3rd Semester Population and Sample

Number of Participants by Department			
Departments	Population	Sample	Percent
A	37	34	91.9%
B	30	17	56.67%
C	31	19	61.29%
E	43	38	88.37%
Total	141	108	76.6%

Research Hypothesis

As indicated above, the researcher's substantive hypothesis was that students believe the third semester's homework assignments, as currently used, are not effective in advancing language proficiency and therefore not helpful to them.

To test this hypothesis, the researcher's questionnaire examined how the third semester students felt about the effectiveness and helpfulness of the type of homework assignments that they received during the third semester. The survey's first question (see Appendix A) was designed to address the research hypothesis, and it indicated that students had mixed feelings about the effectiveness and helpfulness of the third semester homework assignments.

Table 5 below presents the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 6 shows the overall effectiveness ratings for the UPF School as a whole. Table 6 shows that 47 (43.52%) of the participants found the third semester homework to be effective, 9 (8.33%) found their homework assignments to be very effective, and 1 (0.93%) found them extremely effective. On the other hand, 45 (41.67%) of the respondents felt that the third semester homework was not very effective, and 6 (5.55%) found it extremely ineffective. Overall, there was a total of 52.78% positive responses versus 47.22% negative responses about the usefulness and effectiveness of the third semester's homework, which indicates that participants had mixed feelings about the third semester homework assignments, therefore, the hypothesis is neither rejected nor supported significantly.

Table 5

Question 1

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	1	0	0	0	1
Very Effective	2	0	3	4	9
Effective	20	8	10	9	47
Not very Effective	11	9	4	21	45
Extremely Ineffective	0	0	2	4	6
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 6

Question 1

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
1	9	47	45	6	108
0.93%	8.33%	43.52%	41.67%	5.55%	100%

Survey's Second Question

The survey's second question (see Appendix A) was designed to address the above research question by learning about the most effective types of homework assignments that students received during the third semester. Under question two several sub questions (see Appendix A) were used, as follows, to elicit this information.

Survey Question 2a: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Transcription (Listening Comprehension)

Table 7 demonstrates the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 8 displays the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The figures presented in both tables show that out of a total of 108 participants in this study, only 5 (4.63%) students believed that transcription was extremely effective in helping their listening comprehension, 13 (12.04%) believe that it was very effective, and 29 (26.85%) rated it as effective. On the other hand, 37 (34.26%) responded that transcription was not very effective, and 24 (22.22%) rated it as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 47 (43.52%) of the participants with the 61 (56.58%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that the students had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of transcribing listening passages, with more of them feeling they were ineffective. The overall, average rating for the 108 participants was 3.29 (between “effective” and “not very effective”).

Table 7

Question 2a: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (Transcription)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	2	2	1	0	5
Very Effective	2	5	4	2	13
Effective	7	5	6	11	29
Not very Effective	16	5	5	11	37
Extremely Ineffective	7	0	3	14	24
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 8

Question 2a: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF (Transcription)

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
5	13	29	37	24	108
4.63%	12.04%	26.85%	34.26%	22.22%	100%

Survey Question 2b1: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Translation (Listening Comprehension). Table 9 displays the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 10 shows the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The figures presented in both tables show that of 108 participants in this study, 12 (11.11%) students believed that translation was extremely effective, 33 (30.55%) believed that it was very effective, and

47 (43.52%) rated it as effective. On the other hand, 13 (12.04%) responded that it was not very effective, and 3 (2.78%) rated it as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 92 (85.19%) of the participants with the 16 (14.81%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows the majority of respondents believe that homework with translation task was helpful. The overall, average rating for the 108 participants was 2.65, which falls between “very effective” and effective” on the scale.

Table 9

Question 2 b1: Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (Translation, Listening)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	5	2	1	4	12
Very Effective	9	4	4	16	33
Effective	18	9	6	14	47
Not very Effective	2	2	5	4	13
Extremely Ineffective	0	0	3	0	3
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 10

*Question 2, b1: Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF
(Translation, listening)*

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
12	33	47	13	3	108
11.11%	30.55%	43.52%	12.04%	2.78%	100%

Survey Question 2b 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Translation (Reading Comprehension). Table 11 shows the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 12 gives the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for UPF. The figures displayed in both tables show that of 108 participants 15 (13.89%) of them believe that translation was extremely effective, 44 (40.74%) believe that it was very effective, and 40 (37.04%) rated it as effective. On the other hand, 9 (8.33%) responded that it was not very effective, and no one (0.00%) rated it as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 99 (91.67%) of the participants with the 9 (8.33%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that the majority of the students found the reading-translation homework assignments to be helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.4 (between “very effective” and “effective” on the scale).

Table 11

Question 2, b2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (Translation, Reading)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	5	3	2	5	15
Very Effective	18	5	6	15	44
Effective	11	8	7	14	40
Not very Effective	0	1	4	4	9
Extremely Ineffective	0	0	0	0	0
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 12

Question 2, b2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF (Translation, Reading)

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
15	44	40	9	0	108
13.89%	40.74%	37.04%	8.33%	0%	100%

Survey Question 2c 1: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Fill-in-the-blanks (Reading Comprehension). Table 13 presents the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 14 gives the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for UPF. The figures presented in both tables show that of 108 participants in the study, 2 (1.85%) believe that the fill-in-the-blanks with reading task was extremely effective, 6 (5.56%) believe that it was very effective, and 26 (24.07%) rated this type of homework as effective. On the other hand,

46 (42.59%) responded that homework assignments with fill-in-the-blanks tasks were not very effective, and 28 (25.93%) rated them as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 34 (31.48%) of the participants with the 74 (68.52%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that the majority of participants believe that this type of homework assignment is not helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 3.68 (between “effective” and “not very effective,” but close to the latter).

Table13

Question 2, c1: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (Fill-in-the-blanks, Reading)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	1	0	0	1	2
Very Effective	3	0	2	1	6
Effective	10	2	5	9	26
Not very Effective	14	12	7	13	46
Extremely Ineffective	6	3	5	14	28
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 14

*Question 2, c1: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF
(Fill-in-the-blanks,
Reading)*

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
2	6	26	46	28	108
1.85%	5.56%	24.07%	42.59%	25.93%	100%

Survey Question 2c 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Fill-in-the-blanks (Listening Comprehension). Table 15 displays the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 16 gives the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for UPF. The figures presented in both tables shows that of 108 participants, 4 (3.7%) students believe that fill-in-the-blanks with listening tasks was extremely effective, 9 (8.33%) believe that it was very effective, and 29 (26.85%) rated this type of homework as effective. On the other hand, 42 (38.89%) responded that it was not very effective, and 24 (22.22%) rated this type of assignment as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 42 (38.89%) of the participants with the 66 (61.11%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that most students believe this type of homework assignment was not helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 3.68 (between “effective” and “not very effective”).

Table 15

Question 2, c2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (Fill-in-the-blanks, Listening)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	3	0	0	1	4
Very Effective	5	1	2	1	9
Effective	12	4	5	8	29
Not very Effective	10	10	6	16	42
Extremely Ineffective	4	2	6	12	24
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 16

Question 2, c2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF (Fill-in-the-blanks, listening)

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
4	9	29	42	24	108
3.7%	8.33%	26.85%	38.9%	22.22%	100%

Survey Question 2d1: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Multiple-Choice (MC) (Listening Comprehension). Table 17 shows the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 18 gives the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The figures presented in both tables show that of 108 participants, 26 (24.07%) students believe that homework with multiple-choice (MC) tasks for listening was extremely effective, 28

(25.93%) believe that it was very effective, and 36 (33.833%) rated this type of homework as effective. On the other hand, only 8 (7.41%) of the participants believed that assignments with MC tasks for listening were not effective, and 10 (9.26%) believed that they were extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 90 (83.33%) of the participants with the 18 (16.67%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that a large majority of the participants believed homework with MC tasks for listening was helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.52 (between “very effective” and “effective”).

Table 17

Question 2, d1: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (MC, Listening)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	7	0	4	15	26
Very Effective	4	7	7	10	28
Effective	18	5	4	9	36
Not very Effective	1	2	2	3	8
Extremely Ineffective	4	3	2	1	10
total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 18

Question 2, d1: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF (MC, Listening)

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
26	28	36	8	10	108
24.07%	25.93%	33.33%	7.41%	9.26%	100%

Survey Question 2d 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Multiple-Choice (MC)(Reading Comprehension). Table 19 presents the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 20 displays the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for UPF. The figures presented in this table show that of 108 participants, 31 (28.7%) respondents believed that reading homework with multiple-choice tasks was extremely effective, 35 (32.4%) believed that it was very effective, and 33 (5.56%) rated this type of homework as effective. On the other hand, only 6 (5.56%) of the respondents believe that reading homework with MC tasks was not effective, and only 3 (2.78%) rated this type of homework as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 99 (91.67%) of the participants with the 9 (8.33%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that the majority of students believed that this type of homework was helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.21 (“very effective”).

Table 19

Question 2, d2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (MC, Reading)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	11	2	3	15	31
Very Effective	8	7	9	11	35
Effective	15	4	4	10	33
Not very Effective	0	3	2	1	6
Extremely Ineffective	0	1	1	1	3
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 20

Question 2, d2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF (MC, Reading)

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
31	35	33	6	3	108
28.7%	32.4%	30.56%	5.56%	2.78%	100%

Survey Question 2e1: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Constructed Response (CR) (Listening Comprehension). Table 21 presents the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 22 gives the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The figures presented in Table 22 show that of 108 participants, 10 (9.26%) believed that homework assignments with constructed- response (CR) tasks for listening were extremely effective, 29 (26.85%) believe that they were very effective, and 59 (54.63%) rated this type of

homework as effective. On the other hand, 9 (8.33%) of the respondent rated this type of homework as not very effective, and only 1 (0.93%) rated it as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 98 (90.74%) of the participants with the 10 (9.26%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that the vast majority of the respondents feel that this type of homework was helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.56 (between “very effective” and “effective”).

Table 21

Question 2, e1: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (CR, Listening)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	5	2	0	3	10
Very Effective	8	5	8	8	29
Effective	18	9	11	21	59
Not very Effective	2	1	0	6	9
Extremely Ineffective	1	0	0	0	1
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 22

Question 2, e1: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF (CR, Listening)

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
10	29	59	9	1	108
9.26%	26.85%	54.63%	8.33%	0.93%	100%

Survey Question 2e 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Constructed Response (CR)(Reading Comprehension). Table 23 gives the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 24 shows the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for UPF. The figures presented in both tables show that out of 108 participants, 9 (8.33%) believed that reading homework with constructed-response tasks was extremely effective, 33 (30.56%) believed that it was very effective, and 52 (48.15%) believed that this type of homework assignment was effective. On the other hand, 13 (12.04%) rated this type of homework as not very effective, and only 1 (0.92%) rated it as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 94 (87.04%) of the participants with the 14 (12.96%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows most of the respondents believed that this type of homework was helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.67 (between “very effective” and “effective”).

Table 23

Question 2, e2: *Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department (CR, reading)*

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	5	1	0	3	9
Very Effective	8	6	9	10	33
Effective	17	9	8	18	52
Not very Effective	3	1	2	7	13
Extremely Ineffective	1	0	0	0	1

Table 24

Question 2, e2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF (CR, Reading)

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
9	33	52	13	1	108
8.33	30.56	48.15	12.04	0.05	

Survey Question 2f 1: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Research on Cultural Topics (Reading Comprehension). Table 25 presents the ratings frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department and Table 26 gives the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The figures presented in both tables show that of 108 participants in this study, 13 (12.04%) of the respondents believed that research on cultural topics with reading task was extremely effective, 27 (25%) believed that it was very effective, and 41 (37.96%) rated this type of homework as effective. On the other hand, 20 (18.52%) responded that it was not very effective, and 7 (6.48%) rated it as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 81 (75%) of the participants with the 27 (25%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that three quarters of the respondents believed that this type of homework was helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.65 (between “very effective” and “effective”).

Table 25

*Question 2, f1: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department
(Research on Cultural Topics, Reading)*

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	5	4	0	4	13
Very Effective	6	6	7	8	27
Effective	14	5	6	16	41
Not very Effective	8	2	3	7	20
Extremely Ineffective	1	0	3	3	7
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 26

*Question 2, f1: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF
(Research on Cultural Topics, Reading)*

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
13	27	41	20	7	108
12.04%	25%	37.96%	18.52%	6.48%	100%

Survey Question 2, f2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Research on Cultural Topics (Writing). Table 27 shows the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 28 shows the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The figures presented in both tables show that of 108 participants, 14 (12.96%) students believed that writing a report on their research on cultural topics was extremely effective, 17 (15.74%) believed that it is very effective, and 37 (34.26%) rated it as effective. On the other hand, 32 (29.63%) believed that this type of homework was not very effective, and 8 (7.41%) believed that it was extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 68 (62.96%) of the participants with the 40 (37.04%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that students had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of this type of assignment, but with more students feeling it was effective. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.65 (in the “effective” range).

Table 27

*Question 2, f2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department
(Research on Cultural Topics, Writing)*

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	5	5	0	4	14
Very Effective	4	4	4	5	17
Effective	16	5	4	12	37
Not very Effective	8	3	8	13	32
Extremely Ineffective	1	0	3	4	8
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 28

*Question 2, f2: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF
(Research on Cultural Topics, Writing)*

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
14	17	37	32	8	108
12.96%	15.74%	34.26%	29.63%	7.41%	100%

Question 2, f3: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Research on Cultural Topics (Speaking). Table 29 gives the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 30 displays the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The figures presented in both tables show that of 108 participants, 17 (15.74%) students believed that research on cultural topics with speaking task was extremely effective, 33 (30.56%) believed that it was very effective, and 45 (41.67%) rated it as effective. On the other hand, 11 (10.18%) of the participants believed that it was not very effective, and only 2 (1.85%) rated it as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 95 (87.96%) of the participants with the 13 (12.04%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that a majority of respondents believed that this type of homework was helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.52 (between “very effective” and “effective”).

Survey Question 2f 3: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Research on Cultural Topics (Speaking)

Table 29

Question 2, f3: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department
(Research on Cultural Topics, Speaking)

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	5	5	0	4	14
Very Effective	4	4	4	5	17
Effective	16	5	4	12	37
Not very Effective	8	3	8	13	32
Extremely Ineffective	1	0	3	4	8
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 30

Question 2, f3: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF
(Research on Cultural Topics, Speaking)

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
14	17	37	32	8	108
12.96%	15.74%	34.26%	29.63%	7.41%	100%

Survey Question 2g: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi? **A combination of two or three types of homework**

- Translation and transcription (Listening and Reading)

- Filling-in-the-blanks, translation, and summarization (Listening and Reading)

Table 31 displays the rating frequency of homework effectiveness and helpfulness by department, and Table 32 gives the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The figures presented in both tables show that of 108 participants in this study, 17 (15.74%) believed that a combination of two or three types of homework was extremely effective, 24 (22.22%) believed that it was very effective, and 32 (29.63%) believe that it was effective. On the other hand, 26 (24.08%) believed that it was not very effective, and only 2 (1.85%) rated it as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 73 (67.59 %) of the participants with the 35 (32.41%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that students believed this type of homework was helpful. The overall average rating for the 108 participants was 2.69 (in the “effective” range).

Table 31

Question 2, g: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department
A combination of two or three types of homework

Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	6	6	1	4	17
Very Effective	9	4	5	6	24
Effective	12	4	6	10	32
Not very Effective	6	3	6	11	26
Extremely Ineffective	1	0	1	7	9
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 32

Question 2, g: Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF
A combination of two or three types of homework

Overall Rating Frequency of Homework Effectiveness and Helpfulness for UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
17	24	32	26	9	108
15.74%	22.22%	29.63%	24.08%	8.33%	100%

Survey Question 3: How much time do you think is reasonable for students to spend per day on homework?

Please circle only one response.

2 hours 1 ½ hours 1 hour 1/2 hour no time at all

The purpose of the survey's question three was to learn how many hours students believed is reasonable to spend on completing a daily homework assignment, as well as

to find out what students think about having or not having homework at all. The result in Table 33 shows the amount of time recommended by department, and Table 34 presents the overall findings for UPF. The figures presented in both tables show that of 108 participants in this study, 10 (9.26%) of the respondents believed that spending 2 hours per day on homework assignments is reasonable. Twenty-six (24.07%) of the participants felt that a reasonable amount of time to spend on homework assignments per day was 1 ½ hours; and almost half of the students (n= 50, 46.37%) believed that a reasonable amount of time to spend completing every day's homework assignment is 1 hour. On the other hand, 22 (20.37%) of the students felt that only half an hour should be enough for every day's homework assignment.

Interestingly, none of the volunteers in the survey believed that homework is not necessary, which indicates that all students believed having homework is a part of their language learning. Almost all participants pointed out that they had a problem with the amount of homework that they were given every day. They argue that the homework assignments were too long and took them hours to complete.

Table 33

Question 3: Time Spent on Homework by Department

Time Spent on Homework by Department					Total
Time Participants Recommended Spending on HW	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
2 hours	3	3	1	3	10
1 ½ hours	6	5	8	7	26
1 hour	16	5	8	21	50
1/2 hour	9	4	2	7	22
no time at all	0	0	0	0	0
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 34

Question 3: Overall Time Spent on Homework for UPF

Overall Time Spent on Homework for UPF					Total
2 hours	1 ½ hours	1 hour	1/2 hour	no time at all	
10	26	50	22	0	108
9.26%	24.07%	46.3%	20.37%	0.00%	100%

Survey Question 4: Do you prefer homework assignments that require individual work or group work or both?

Please circle one response and explain your choice.

The purpose of the survey's question 4 was to learn how comfortable students were learning collaboratively and learning from each other. Collaborative learning is especially essential when students are required to do research on cultural topics instead of completing isolated homework assignments as usual. Table 35 displays student preferences by department, and Table 36 shows the overall frequency and percentage of ratings for the UPF School. The majority of students (n= 90 (83.33%) prefer to work individually, 3 (2.78%) prefer to do their homework in a group rather than individually; and 15 (13.89%) of the participants felt more comfortable having both individual and group homework assignments.

Table 35

Preference for Individual and Group Work by Department

Preference for Individual and Group Work by Department				Total
Departments	Preferred Individual or Group work, or both			
	Individual Work	Group Work	Individual and Group Work	
A	26	1	7	34
B	15	1	1	17
C	16	0	3	19
E	33	1	4	38
Total	90	3	15	108

Table 36

Overall Preference for Individual and Group Work in UPF

Overall Preference for Individual and Group Work in UPF			Total
Individual Work	Group Work	Individual and Group Work	
90	3	15	108
83.33%	2.78%	13.89%	100%

Survey Question 5: Rank the following types of homework assignments from most helpful (1) to least helpful (7) in expanding your language knowledge.

Please circle one response and explain your choice.

Department A. Question 5 was designed to find out how participants ranked the seven most common types of homework assignments (translation, transcription, fill-in-the-blanks, multiple-choice, constructed-response, research on cultural topics, and a combination of 2 or 3 types of homework assignments) that they usually received from their teaching team during the third semester.

Table 37 displays participants' ranking preferences (frequency and percentage of rankings), and Table 38 shows the average rankings of helpfulness of different types of homework for Department A. The reader will note that homework with multiple-choice tasks, with an average of 2.88, was ranked as the most helpful type of homework assignment that students received during the third semester. Translation, with an average of 3.06, was ranked as the second most helpful type of homework assignment, a combination of 2 or 3 types of homework, with an average of 3.12, was the third most helpful, and CR, with an average of 3.88, the fourth most helpful. Fill-in-the-blanks, with an average of 4.82, is roughly at the midpoint of the 7-point helpfulness scale. On the other hand, both researches on cultural topics, with an average of 5.03, and transcription, with an average of 5.21, were ranked as the least helpful homework assignments.

In their written comments on the questionnaire, the participants pointed out that their transcription assignments are too long, contain lots of unfamiliar vocabulary, are irrelevant to the daily instructional objectives, and are not at students' language level (too low or too high). About research on cultural topics, a number of the participants explained that they never had research on cultural topics as a homework assignment.

Table 38

Question 5: Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for Department A

Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for Department A	
Type of HW Activities	Average Ranking
M C	2.88
Translation	3.06
Combination of 2 or 3	3.12
C R	3.88
Fill-in-the-blanks	4.82
Research	5.03
Transcription	5.21

Survey Question 5: Rank the following types of homework assignments from most helpful (1) to least helpful (7) in expanding your language knowledge.

Please circle one response and explain your choice.

Department B. Table 39 displays participants' ranking preferences (frequency and percentage of rankings), and Table 40 shows the average rankings of helpfulness of different types of homework for department B. The reader will note that homework with translation tasks, with an average of 2.59, was ranked as the most helpful type of homework assignment that students received during the third semester. CR, with an average of 3.29, was ranked as the second most helpful type of homework assignment, transcription, with an average of 3.12, was the third most helpful, a combination of 2 or 3 types of homework, with an average of 3.59, was the fourth most helpful. MC, with an average of 3.65, was ranked as the fifth most helpful homework assignments. Research

Table 40

Question 5: Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for Department B

Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for Department B	
Type of HW activities	Average Ranking
Translation	2.59
C R	3.29
Transcription	3.41
Combination of 2 or 3	3.59
M C	3.65
Research	4.65
Fill-in-the-blanks	6.82

Survey Question 5: Rank the following types of homework assignments from most helpful (1) to least helpful (7) in expanding your language knowledge.

Please circle one response and explain your choice.

Department C. Table 41 displays participants' ranking preferences (frequency and percentage of rankings), and Table 42 shows the average rankings of helpfulness of different types of homework for department C. The reader will note that homework with translation tasks, with an average of 2.63, was ranked as the most helpful type of homework assignment that students received during the third semester. MC, with an average of 3.32, was ranked as the second most helpful, and transcription, with an average of 3.95, was the third most helpful type of homework assignment. CR, with an average of 4.11, research on cultural topics, with an average of 4.26, and fill-in-the-blanks, with an average of 4.68, is roughly at the midpoint of the 7-point helpfulness

scale. On the other hand, a combination of 2 or 3 types of homework assignments, with an average of 5.05, was ranked as the least helpful homework assignment.

Table 41

Question 5: Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework
Department C

Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework: Rankings from Most (1) to Least Helpful (7) With Number and Percentage of Participants Assigning Each Rank								Total
Type of HW	Rankings from Most (1) to Least Helpful (7)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Translation	9 47.37%	2 10.53%	2 10.53%	3 15.78%	1 5.26%	0 0.00%	2 10.53%	19 100%
Transcription	1 5.27%	4 21.05%	2 10.53%	4 21.05%	5 26.31%	2 10.53%	1 5.26%	19 100%
Fill-in-the-blanks	1 5.27%	2 10.53%	3 15.78%	2 10.53%	3 15.79%	4 21.05%	4 21.05%	19 100%
M C	3 15.78%	6 31.57%	2 10.53%	3 15.79%	2 10.53%	1 5.27%	2 10.53%	19 100%
C R	1 5.27%	3 15.79%	5 26.31%	3 15.79%	0 0.00%	5 26.31%	2 10.53%	19 100%
Research	3 15.78%	2 10.53%	3 15.79%	2 10.53%	1 5.27%	4 21.05%	4 21.05%	19 100%
Combination of 2 or 3	1 5.26%	0 0.00%	2 10.53%	2 10.53%	7 36.84%	3 15.79%	4 21.05%	19 100%
Total	19 100%	19 100%	19 100.0%	19 100%	19 100%	19 100%	19 100%	19 100%

Table 42

Question 5: Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for Department C

Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for Department C	
Type of HW Activities	Average Ranking
Translation	2.63
M C	3.32
Transcription	3.95
C R	4.11
Research	4.26
Fill-in-the-blanks	4.68
Combination of 2 or 3	5.05

Survey Question 5: Rank the following types of homework assignments from most helpful (1) to least helpful (7) to your language learning?

Please circle one response and explain your choice.

Department E. Table 43 displays participants' ranking preferences (frequency and percentage of rankings), and Table 44 shows the average rankings of helpfulness of different types of homework for department E. The reader will note that homework with translation tasks, with an average of 2.66, was ranked as the most helpful type of homework assignment that students received during the third semester. MC, with an average of 2.68, was ranked as the second most helpful type of homework assignment, CR, with an average of 3.42, was the third most helpful, and a combination of 2 or 3 types of homework assignments, with an average of 3.87, was ranked as the fourth most helpful homework assignments. On the other hand, transcriptions, with an average of 5,

research on cultural topics, with an average of 5.05, and fill-in-the-blanks, with an average of 5.32, were all ranked as the least helpful homework assignments.

Table 43

Question 5: Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework
Department E

Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework: Rankings from Most (1) to Least Helpful (7) With Number and Percentage of Participants Assigning Each Rank								Total
Type of HW	Rankings from Most (1) to Least Helpful (7)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Translation	12 31.58%	7 18.42%	7 18.42%	7 18.42%	4 10.53%	1 2.63%	0 0.00%	38 100%
Transcription	2 5.26%	1 2.63%	5 13.16%	7 18.42%	4 10.53%	10 26.32%	9 23.68%	38 100%
Fill-in-the-blanks	0 0.00%	3 7.89%	3 7.89%	3 7.9%	9 23.68%	10 26.32%	10 26.32%	38 100%
M C	12 31.58%	11 28.95%	3 7.9%	6 15.79%	3 7.89%	1 2.63%	2 5.26%	38 100%
C R	2 5.26%	11 28.95%	10 26.32%	6 15.79%	4 10.53%	3 7.89%	2 5.26%	38 100%
Research	3 7.9%	1 2.63%	3 7.89%	6 15.79%	6 15.79%	9 23.68%	10 26.32%	38 100%
Combination of 2 or 3	7 18.42%	4 10.53%	7 18.41%	3 7.89%	8 21.05	4 10.53%	5 13.16%	38 100%
Total	38 100%	38 100%	38 100.0%	38 100%	38 100%	38 100%	38 100%	38 100%

Table 44

Question 5: Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for Department E

Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for Department E	
Type of HW Activities	Average Ranking
Translation	2.66
M C	2.68
C R	3.42
Combination of 2 or 3	3.87
Transcription	5
Research	5.05
Fill-in-the-blanks	5.32

Survey Question 5: Rank the following types of homework assignments from most helpful (1) to least helpful (7) to your language learning?

Please circle one response and explain your choice.

All Departments (A, B, C, E). Table 45 displays participants' overall ranking preferences (frequency and percentage of rankings) for UPF. Table 46 shows the overall average rankings of helpfulness of different types of homework for the UPF School. The figures presented in Table 46 show that of 108 participants in this study, 33 (30.55%) ranked translation as the most helpful type of homework assignment, and 34 (31.48%) of the participants ranked fill-in-the-blanks as the least helpful type of homework assignment for the third semester.

The figures presented in Table 46 show that the most helpful type of homework assignment for UPF, with an average ranking of 2.24 was transcription. Translation, with an average of 2.77, was the second most helpful. MC, with an average of 3, was the third most helpful, and a combination of 2 or 3 types of homework assignments, with an

average of 3.8, was the fourth most helpful type of homework assignment. CR, with an average of 3.83, was the fifth most helpful homework assignment. Research on cultural topics, with an average of 4.84, is near the mid-point of the helpfulness scale. On the hand, fill-in-the-blanks, with an overall average of 5.29 was ranked as the least helpful type of homework assignment for the third semester's students.

Table 45

Question 5: Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework
UPF

[illegible]

Table 46

*Question 5: Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework
UPF*

Average Rankings of Helpfulness of Different Types of Homework for UPF	
Type of HW Activities	Average Ranking
Transcription	2.24
Translation	2.77
M C	3
Combination of 2 or 3	3.8
C R	3.83
Research	4.84
Fill-in-the-blanks	5.29

Survey Question 6: In your opinion, can the homework assignments be improved?

(Yes) Please explain how?

(No) Why not?

The purpose of the survey's question 6 was to learn about the students' opinions on whether the third semester's homework assignments can or cannot be improved.

Table 47 displays frequency and percentage of the participants' opinions for each department under study as well as their overall opinions on whether the homework can be improved for UPF. The figures presented in this table show that 93 (86.11%) of all participants (n=108) believe that the third semester's homework assignments can be improved, and 15 (13.89%) of them either believe that it cannot be improved, or responded that they are satisfied with the current homework assignments.

Table 48 displays participants' most common opinions on how the homework assignments can be improved. The figures displayed in this table show that 32 (29.6%)

of the participants suggested that the focus should be on quality and not on the quantity of homework, therefore, the amount of homework assignments can be reduced to allow more time for self-study. Twenty-five (23.15%) of the participants believed that the homework assignments can be improved by preparing them based on the students' language proficiency level (not too low and not too high) as well as based on the learning objectives of the course. Twenty-one (19.44%) of the participants believed that homework assignments should be designed like the DLPT style and focused on students' weak areas. Twelve (11.11%) of the participants believed that homework assignments can be improved by providing constructive feedback to students' homework. Eleven (10.19%) of the participants suggested that using more authentic materials and presentation of cultural issues will improve the current homework assignments, and 7 (6.48%) believed that the homework assignments can be improved by having students do research on daily News and presenting their findings in class.

Table 47

*Question 6: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Opinions
UPF*

Frequency and Percentage of Participants' opinion on whether the homework can be improved for Each Department and UPF			
Departments	HW Can be Improved	HW Cannot be Improved	Total
A	28 25.93%	6 5.56%	34
B	17 15.74%	0 0.00%	17
C	14 12.96%	5 4.63%	19
E	34 31.48%	4 3.7%	38
UPF	93 86.11%	15 13.89%	108 100%

Table 48

Question 6: Overall Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Most Common Opinions

Overall Frequency and Percentage of the Participants' most Common Opinions for UPF	Total
Focusing more on quality rather than on quantity, therefore, the amount of HW can be reduced to allow more time for self-study	32 29.63%
Preparing HW based on students' language proficiency level, and making them relevant to the course objectives	25 23.15%
Making HW more like DLPT style, and focusing on students' weak areas.	21 19.44%
Providing constructive feedback on students' homework assignments	12 11.11%
Using more authentic materials for HW, and presenting cultural issues	11 10.19%
Having students do more research on daily News as HW, and presenting their findings in class	7 6.48%
Total	108 100%

Survey Question 7: What other types of homework do you think would be beneficial in the third semester and why?

The survey's seventh question (see Appendix A) was designed to address the second research question: RQ2: "What other kinds of homework assignments would students recommend as beneficial in the third semester?"

Table 49 shows the frequency and percentage of all departments about the types of homework assignments that the participants think would be beneficial in the third semester. Table 50 displays the overall frequency and percentage of the responses for the UPF School.

Table 49 shows that there were both interdepartmental similarities and differences in additional types of homework that participants believed would be beneficial in the third semester. For example, participants from all four departments mentioned three types of homework: a) homework that would allow more time for self-study, b) homework that would help to learn new vocabulary and improve listening and reading, and c) homework based on authentic materials.

In terms of differences, only participants from Department A mentioned homework that receives constructive feedback. Only participants from Department B mentioned homework that would involve research, and only a small percentage of participants in Department A indicated that they did not see a need for additional types of homework.

Within the types of homework that participants from three or more departments recommended, the reader will note interdepartmental differences in the percentage of participants recommending them. For example, 31.58% of the participants in Department E recommended homework that would allow more time for self-study, compared with

much lower percentages in the other three departments, or 34.22% of the participants in Department E recommended homework that helps to learn new vocabulary and improves listening and reading, compared with lower percentage in the other three departments.

Survey Question 7: What other types of homework do you think would be beneficial in the third semester and why?

Table 49

All Departments: Additional Types of Homework That Participants Recommended

Additional Types of Homework that Participants Recommended as Beneficial in Third Semester				
Type of Homework	Departments			
	A	B	C	E
HW that is like DLPT 5 tests/helps to pass DLPT5	6 17.65%	2 11.76%	3 15.78%	2 5.26%
HW that allows more time for self-study	5 14.72%	2 11.76%	2 10.53%	12 31.58%
HW that helps to learn new vocabulary and combines listening and reading	7 20.58%	2 11.76%	2 10.53%	13 34.22%
HW that receives constructive feedback	4 11.76%			
HW that is based on authentic materials	2 5.88%	4 23.54%	2 10.53%	2 5.26%
HW that we already receive is good enough	2 5.88%			
HW that allows research on various topics		3 17.65%		
No response	8 23.53%	4 23.53%	10 52.63%	9 23.68%
Total %	34 100.0%	17 100.0%	19 100.0%	38 100.0%

The figures presented in Table 50 show that 21 (19.45%) of the participants in this study think homework assignments that allow more time for self-study are beneficial in the third semester; 27 (25%) think homework that helps to learn vocabulary and improves listening and reading is beneficial, 13 (12.04%) believe homework that is like DLPT5 would be beneficial. Ten (9.26%) of the respondents found homework with authentic materials as beneficial, 4 (3.7%) believed homework that receives constructive feedback is beneficial; 2 (1.85%) mentioned homework that they already receive is good enough, and 31 (28.7%) of the participants did not respond to question seven of the survey.

Table 50

Types of Homework That Participants Think Would be Beneficial in 3rd Semester UPF

Types of Homework that Participants Think Would be Beneficial in 3 rd Semester UPF	Total Frequencies and Percentages
HW that allows more time for self-study	21 19.45%
HW that helps to learn vocabulary and improves listening and reading	27 25%
HW that is like DLPT5 tests	13 12.04%
HW that is based on authentic materials	10 9.26%
HW that receives constructive feedback	4 3.7%
HW that we already receive is good enough	2 1.85%
No response	31 28.7%
Total	108 100%

Survey Question 8: Please check any types of homework from the list below that you may or may not have had during the third semester, but that you would like to have because you think they can significantly help you learn Persian Farsi.

Table 51 displays the total frequency and percentage of the participants' preferences by department, and Table 52 shows the overall frequency and percentage of preferred homework assignments for UPF. The figures presented in Table 51 show that 30 (88.2%) of the participants from department A preferred to have homework that would help them improve their listening and reading comprehension, as did 15 (88.23%) from department B, 15 (78.94%) from department C, and 35 (92.10%) from department E.

Table 51

*Question 8: Participants' Preferred Types of Homework Assignments
All Departments*

Participants' Preferred Types of Homework Assignments by Department				
Preferred Homework	Departments			
	A	B	C	E
HW with helpful Listening & Reading activities	30 88.23%	15 88.23%	15 78.94%	35 92.10%
HW based on Authentic Materials	27 79.41%	15 88.23%	15 78.94%	32 84.21%
HW that receives Constructive Feedback	26 76.47%	15 88.23%	15 78.94%	25 65.78%
HW that is Fun to Do	21 61.76%	12 70.58%	14 73.68%	32 84.21%
HW that is Challenging	23 67.64%	15 88.23%	13 68.42%	26 68.42%
HW that is at Language Level	25 73.53%	14 82.35%	10 52.63%	25 65.79%
HW that contains Cultural Information	22 64.7%	14 82.35%	13 68.42%	24 63.15%
HW with Translation, Transcription tasks	11 32.35%	11 64.7%	7 36.84%	13 34.21%
No Response	1 2.94%	0 0.00%	1 5.25%	0 0.00%

The figures presented in Table 52 show that listening and reading assignments were preferred by 95 (87.96%) of the participants, authentic materials by 89 (82.41%), homework that receives constructive feedback by 81 (75%), homework that is fun to do by 79 (73.15%), homework that is challenging by 77 (71.3%), homework that is at students' language proficiency level by 74 (68.52%), homework containing cultural information by 73 (67.59%), and homework with translation and transcription tasks by 42 (38.89%) of the participants. One participant 1 (2.94%) from department A, and one participant (5.25%) from department C did not respond to question eight of the survey.

Table 52

Question 8: Participants' Preferred Types of Homework Assignments for UPF

Participants' Preferred Types of Homework Assignments for UPF	Frequencies and Percentages
Type of Homework	
Listening, Reading	95 87.96
Authentic Materials	89 82.41
Constructive Feedback	81 75
Fun to Do	79 73.15
Challenging	77 71.3
Language Level	74 68.52
Cultural Information	73 67.59
Translation, Transcription	42 38.89
No Response	2 1.85

Question 9: Do you regularly receive adequate feedback from your instructors on your homework assignments?

(Yes) Please explain how often?

(No) Please explain why not?

Table 53 displays by department and for UPF as a whole and shows the frequency and percentage of participants who responded affirmatively or negatively to Question 9. Table 53 shows that 29 (85.29%) of the participants from department A (n=34) regularly received adequate feedback, and 5 (14.71%) responded that they did not. It should be noted that 3 of these 5 participants explained that they had too much homework and there was not enough time to review it with them, and the remaining 2 of the participants explained that it depends on the teacher (some give feedback and some don't).

Of the 17 participants from department B, 15 (88.24%) responded that they regularly received adequate feedback, and 2 (11.76%) responded that they did not. It should be noted that 1 of these 2 respondents explained that there was not enough time for the teachers to review the homework, and the other student found that the homework assignments were not useful.

Of the 19 participants from department C, 13 (68.42%) responded that they regularly received adequate feedback, and 6 (31.58%) responded that they did not. It should be noted that 4 of these 6 respondents found that there was not enough time for the teachers to review the homework with them, and the remaining 2 of the 6 participants explained that their homework assignments were not thoroughly reviewed.

Of 38 participants from department E, 25 (65.79%) responded that they regularly received adequate feedback, and 13 (34.21%) of them responded that they did not. It needs to be noted that of these 13 respondents, six explained that because of the large

number of homework assignments there was not enough time for adequate feedback and teachers just rushed to stay on schedule, and 5 participants stated that they did not receive feedback on a regular basis. The remaining 2 respondents did not give any explanation.

Table 53 also shows that 82 (75.93%) of the 108 participants in the study regularly received adequate feedback on their homework assignments, and 26 (24.07%) did not. It should be noted that the responses to question 9 need to be interpreted with caution because the question inadvertently asked two questions—whether the students regularly received feedback on their homework and whether the feedback was adequate (an issue addressed separately in question 10). Students who responded affirmatively to question 9 presumably found the homework feedback to be both regular and adequate, but those who answered negatively could have done so for three different reasons. They could have said “no” because a) feedback was not received regularly, b) feedback was in some ways inadequate, and c) both a and b.

Table 53

Adequate Feedback Received Regularly by Department and for UPF

Adequate Feedback Received Regularly by Department and for UPF			Total
Departments	Receive Adequate Feedback		
	Yes	No	
A	29 85.29	5 14.71	34
B	15 88.24	2 11.76	17
C	13 68.42	6 31.58	19
E	25 65.79	13 34.21	38
Total UPF	82 75.93%	26 24.07	108 100%

Question 10: How would you evaluate the feedback you received?

Table 54 displays, by department, the participants' evaluation of the effectiveness of their teachers' feedback on homework assignments, and Table 55 presents the same information for UPF as a whole. The figures presented in both tables show that of the 108 participants, only 9 (4.63%) felt that the feedback that they received was extremely effective, 34 (12.04%) believed that it was very effective, and 39 (26.85%) believed that the feedback was effective. On the other hand, 20 (34.26%) responded that the feedback was not very effective, and 6 (22.22%) rated the feedback as extremely ineffective.

A comparison of the positive ratings (extremely effective, very effective, and effective) given by 82 (75.93%) of the participants with the 26 (24.07%) ratings on the negative side (not very effective, and extremely ineffective) shows that most participants evaluated the feedback that they received as positive, and one-fourth of them rated it as

negative. Overall, the rating for 108 participants (n=108) with an average of 2.81 is near the mid-point of the effectiveness scale (between “very effective” and “effective”).

Table 54

Question 10: Participants’ Evaluation of Effectiveness of Teacher Feedback on Homework Assignments by Department

Participants’ Evaluation of Effectiveness of Teacher Feedback on Homework Assignments, by Department					Total
Effectiveness Rating	Departments				
	A	B	C	E	
Extremely Effective	2	2	3	2	9
Very Effective	13	5	5	11	34
Effective	16	7	7	9	39
Not very Effective	3	3	2	12	20
Extremely Ineffective	0	0	2	4	6
Total	34	17	19	38	108

Table 55

Question 10: Participants’ Evaluation of Effectiveness of Teacher Feedback UPF

Participants’ Evaluation of Effectiveness of Teacher Feedback on Homework Assignments For UPF					Total
Extremely effective	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Extremely ineffective	
9	34	39	20	6	108
4.63%	12.04%	26.85%	34.26%	22.22%	100%

Summary of Students' Comments on Homework Effectiveness For UPF

What follows is a summary of comments that students wrote to explain the effectiveness ratings that they assigned to different types of homework. The researcher believes that providing a brief summary of students' explanations of their choices will add to the value of findings of the study and provide the reader with more in-depth information about the feelings and opinions that students have about the effectiveness and helpfulness of the homework assignments that they received during the third semester.

Survey Subquestion 1: Transcription (Listening)

Of the 108 participants in this study, 33 (30.56%) wrote positive comments on this questionnaire item and believe that transcription helped them understand what was said in a passage, or helped them with spelling and learning vocabulary, while 54 (50%) of them complained that transcription was very time consuming because the passages were too long, the speed of the audio files was too fast, the passages were not at their language level, and/or there were too many unknown words that had not been introduced in class. The remaining participants 21 (19.44%) provided no comments on this survey question.

Students who provided negative comments pointed out that if passages were shorter or slower and at the appropriate language level, transcription homework would be beneficial. Similarly, 12.91% of the 108 participants pointed out that transcription was good in the earlier semesters (semesters 1 and 2), but not helpful in the third semester because it was time consuming and took away from their independent study time. Table 56 displays the number and percentage of participants who made positive and negative

comments on transcription listening, and the number and percentage of participants, who did not make comments on the survey's first subquestion (transcription).

Table 56

Survey Subquestion 1

Number and Percentage of Students' Comments on Transcription (listening) as a Homework Assignment: Positive, Negative, and No Comment		
Positive	Negative	No Comment
33 (30.56%)	54 (50%)	21 (19.44%)

Survey subquestion 2: Translation (listening and reading)

The participants' comments about the effectiveness and helpfulness of translation (listening and reading) were positive. Table 57 displays the frequency and percentage of students' comments on both listening and reading translation as homework assignments for UPF.

The reader will note that a total of 72 of the 108 participants commented on listening translation (LT). The remaining 36 participants made no comment on listening translation. Similarly, 66 of the 108 participants commented on reading translation, while the remaining 42 did not. Table 57 displays students' comments; 61(56.48%) were positive and 11(10.19%) were negative for listening translation. The reader will note that 36 (33.33%) of the participants made no comments on listening translation. For reading translation, 58 (53.7%) of the 108 students made positive comments, while 8 (7.41%) made negative remarks. The reader will note that 42 (38.89%) of the participants made no comments on reading translation.

Table 57

Survey Subquestion 2

Number and Percentage of Students Who Made Comments (Positive and Negative) on Listening and Reading Translation as Homework Assignments					
Translation Listening			Translation Reading		
Positive	Negative	No Response	Positive	Negative	No Response
61 56.48%	11 10.19%	36 35.19%	58 53.7%	8 7.41%	42 38.89

Survey Subquestion 3: Fill-in-the-blanks (listening and reading)

An examination of the participants' comments about the effectiveness and helpfulness of the fill-in-the-blanks listening and reading homework assignments indicates that this type of homework received the highest negative response from the participants. Table 58 displays students' comments 11(10.19% positive, 63(58.33% negative), and 34 (31.48% no response) for fill-in-the-blanks listening. Students' comments 8 (7.41% positive), 45 (7.66% negative), and 45 (41.66% no response) on the fill-in-the-blanks reading for UPF are also displayed in this table.

Table 58

Survey Subquestion 3

Number and Percentage of Students Who Made Comments (Positive and Negative) on Fill-in-the-blanks as Homework Assignments					
Listening Fill-in-the-blanks			Reading Fill-in-the-blanks		
Positive	Negative	No Response	Positive	Negative	No Response
11 10.19%	63 58.33%	34 31.48%	8 7.41%	45 41.66%	45 41.66%

Survey Subquestion 4: MC (listening and reading)

The students' comments demonstrate that they think multiple-choice homework assignments will prepare them for the final proficiency evaluations (DLPT5). Well over half of the participants (70.37%) believed that MC assignments for listening would prepare them for the final listening DLPT5; 62.96% of them believed that MC assignments for reading would help them in the final reading DLPT5. Students' comments indicate that MC homework assignments helped them understand what is said in a passage, or that MC homework helped them with spelling, comprehension, and picking up some words by listening to or reading the passages, however, although students' comments on MC homework assignments were mostly positive, they also commented that the questions were not properly worded in English. Overall, despite some criticisms, the participants' comments reflected a positive opinion of the effectiveness and helpfulness of the MC homework assignments for both reading and listening. Since the majority of the participants felt that MC homework for reading and listening were effective homework assignments in helping them to learn Persian Farsi and to prepare for the final DLPT5, these types of assignments must be included in the answer to research question 1. Table 59 displays students' comments 76 (70.37%) positive, 9 (8.33%) negative, and 23 (21.3% no response) for MC listening. The table also presents students' comments 68 (62.96% positive), 6 (5.55% negative), and 34 (31.48% no response) on MC reading for UPF.

Table 59

Survey Subquestion 4 On Listening and Reading

Number and Percentage of Students Who Made Comments (Positive and Negative) on MC Listening and Reading as Homework Assignments					
MC Listening			MC Reading		
Positive	Negative	No Response	Positive	Negative	No Response
76 70.37%	9 8.33%	23 21.3%	68 62.96%	6 5.55%	34 31.48%

Survey Subquestion 5: Constructed-response (CR), (listening and reading)

The survey's fifth subquestion asked students' opinions about the relative helpfulness of seven types of homework assignments that they had been given. The majority of participants expressed positive opinions. Since the participant's comments reflected a positive opinion of the effectiveness and helpfulness of the CR homework assignments for both reading and listening, these types of assignments must be included in the answer to research question 1. Table 60 displays students' comments 68(62.96% positive, 7(6.48%) negative, and 33 (30.56%) no response for CR listening. Students' comments 52 (48.15%) positive, 8 (7.41%) negative, and 48 (44.44%) no response on CR reading for UPF are also displayed in this table.

Table 60

Survey Subquestion 5 On Listening and Reading
UPF

Number and Percentage of Students Who Made Comments (Positive and Negative) on CR Listening and Reading as Homework Assignments					
CR Listening			CR Reading		
Positive	Negative	No Response	Positive	Negative	No Response
68 62.96%	7 6.48%	33 30.56%	52 48.15%	8 7.41%	48 44.44%

Survey Subquestion 6: Research on Cultural Topics (Reading, Writing, and Speaking)

Table 61 displays the number and percentage of the 108 students who wrote comments on research on cultural topics for reading, writing, and speaking as homework assignments. As can be seen in the table, 47 (43.52%) of the 108 students wrote positive comments on reading, 41 (37.96%) wrote positive comments on writing, and 61 (56.48%) wrote positive comments on speaking; that is, a total of 149 (see Table 62) positive comments on the three skills (reading, writing, and speaking) were provided by the participants. Far fewer students wrote negative comments: 25 (23.15%) wrote negative comments on reading, 18 (16.67%) wrote negative comments on writing, and only 9 (8.33%) wrote negative comments on speaking, which means only a total of 52 (see Table 62) negative comments were made by the participants on the three skills (reading, writing, and speaking).

Table 61

Survey Subquestion 6: Research on Cultural Topics
UPF

Number and Percentage of Students Who Made Comments (Positive and Negative) on Research on Cultural Topics (Reading, Writing, and Speaking) as Homework Assignments								
Reading			Writing			Speaking		
Positive	Negative	No Response	Positive	Negative	No Response	Positive	Negative	No Response
47 43.52%	25 23.15%	36 33.33%	41 37.96%	18 16.67%	49 45.37%	61 56.48%	9 8.33%	38 35.19%

The participants made more positive comments on research on cultural topics for speaking than they did on research on cultural topics for reading or writing. In their comments, students mentioned that reporting on news events about cultural issues is good speaking practice for the final oral proficiency test (OPI). Students' positive comments suggest that they believe cultural awareness about the target language helps to understand the language better. For example, in their comments, students pointed out that culturally-related homework helps them to build background knowledge, learn new vocabulary, and prepare for the final exams.

Students' positive comments about research on cultural topics for speaking indicate that more than half of the participants (n = 61) felt that research on cultural topics as homework for speaking (presenting the findings of their research in class) was an effective type of homework assignment that helped them to learn Persian Farsi, therefore, this type of homework assignment must be included in the answer to research question 1 as well. The total number of positive (n=149) and negative (n=52) comments

about the research on cultural topics for all types of homework assignments (Reading, Writing, and speaking) is displayed in Table 62 below.

Table 62

Survey Subquestion 6: Research on Cultural Topics
UPF

Number of Students' Comments on Research on Cultural Topics for Reading, Writing, and Speaking as Homework Assignments	
Total Number of Comments	
Positive	Negative
n=149	n=52

Survey Subquestion 7: A combination of two or three types of homework (transcription and translation for listening and reading, or fill-in-the-blanks, translation, and summarization for listening and reading)

Participants made both positive and negative comments on the type of homework assignment that consists of a combination of two or three types of homework assignments, which indicates that the students had mixed feelings about the effectiveness and helpfulness of this type of homework assignment. Table 63 displays the number and percentage of the 108 participants who made positive or negative comments.

Table 63

Survey Subquestion 7: Comments on Combination of Two or Three Types of Homework

Number and Percentage of Students' Overall Positive and Negative Comments on a Combination of Two or Three Types of Homework Assignments	
Positive	Negative
45 (41.67%)	29 (26.85%)

Research Question Two

What other kinds of homework assignments would students recommend as beneficial in the third semester?

The overall comments on the survey's seventh question indicate that the students' recommendations are based on their concerns about having enough time for independent study, receiving feedback, working on authentic materials, having enough time for learning new words from their assignments, and working on the types of homework that are like the DLPT. Thus, the overall response to the survey's seventh question is consistent with the other comments and critiques that the participants in this study made about the homework assignments they received during the third semester. Table 64 displays the number and percentage of participants who recommended particular types of homework.

Table 64

Homework That Participants Thought Would Be Beneficial in 3rd Semester

Homework that Participants Thought Would be Beneficial in 3 rd Semester	
All Departments (A, B, C, E)	
Type of Homework	Number and Percentage
HW that allows more time for self-study	21 (19.44%)
HW that is like DLPT5 tests	17 (15.74%)
HW that improves our listening and reading	14 (12.96%)
HW that helps to learn vocabulary	11 (10.19%)
HW that is based on authentic materials	7 (6.48%)
HW that we already receive is good enough	3 (2.78%)
HW that receives constructive feedback	2 (1.85%)
No response	33 (30.56%)
Total	108 (100%)

Appendixes F, G, H, and I include several tables that provide students' comments on the homework assignments that they received during the third semester and the reasons why they found some assignments more helpful than others while finding other assignments less effective.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In 2004, a new assessment standard (DLPT5) was introduced by the Department of Defense (DOD) to assess the reading, listening, and speaking proficiency skills of military personnel. Since the existing version of the Undergraduate Persian Farsi (UPF) School's curriculum could not meet the new high standard of the DOD, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center's (DLIFLC) top decision makers established a curriculum development division in 2005 to review the existing curriculum and to provide a new curriculum that could respond to the new demand. The assigned curriculum developers have completed textbooks for the first semester, and currently are working on the second semester's textbooks, but they have not yet produced any textbooks for the third semester.

The lack of an updated curriculum and textbooks for the third semester, and the lack of a standard homework policy that could be followed by all instructors of all teaching teams led the UPF's administrators to provide a general homework guideline (see page 3) to fill the gap during the development of a new curriculum and a general homework policy. The goal and effort of the UPF's administrators with regard to the homework problem encouraged the researcher to design a research proposal and conduct a study on the effectiveness and helpfulness of the homework assignments used in the third semester in the Persian Farsi (PF) language course at the DLIFLC.

The purpose of this evaluation study was to elicit students' feelings and opinions about the homework assignments that are used during the third semester of the PF language course at the DLIFLC. This study attempted to identify the most effective and

helpful types of homework assignments that students receive during the third semester as well as to learn what other types of homework students believe would be beneficial to them.

Discussion of Findings

Research Hypothesis

Based on nine years of experience teaching Persian Farsi in the UPF, the researcher hypothesized that students believe the third semester's homework assignments, as currently used, are not effective in advancing language proficiency and therefore not helpful to them.

The survey's first question (see Appendix A)--**Overall, how effective have the third semester homework assignments been in helping you to learn Persian Farsi?**--was designed to address the research hypothesis. Survey responses indicate that the respondents had mixed feelings about the effectiveness and helpfulness of the third semester homework assignments. The descriptive analysis of the findings reveals that less than half of the participants felt the assignments were not helpful; the hypothesis is therefore not completely supported (see Chapter Four for more details).

The descriptive analysis of the participants' comments about the effectiveness and helpfulness of each type of homework assignment indicated that although participants found some types of homework assignments helpful, they pointed out several issues they have with the homework assignments. Overall, participants' comments indicate that the main problem that the majority of the students had with some types of homework assignments such as transcription was not with the type of homework assignment itself, but with the way specific assignments were prepared and implemented. In the

researcher's opinion, this problem can be prevented through better planning, better preparing and better managing of the homework assignments given by instructors.

Under the survey's second question 13 subquestions (see Appendix A) were used to address Research Question 1.

Research Question One

RQ1: What types of homework assignments do students believe are most effective in helping them learn Persian Farsi?

Transcription. Based on the descriptive analysis of participants' comments, students believe that transcription, as assigned, is not one of the most effective types of homework assignment in helping them learn Persian Farsi because it is too long and contains many unfamiliar words that were not introduced to them before. Students explained that they spend most of their time looking up the meaning of the new words, however, students' comments revealed that they don't mind doing transcription if the length of the text for transcription is short and does not contain too many unfamiliar words.

Translation. Students' comments and recommendations demonstrate that they believe translation (listening and reading), indeed, is an effective homework assignment for the third semester students. Their comments included some problems they had with passage length, amount of unfamiliar vocabulary, passage level, and with written translation. Thus, an overall conclusion drawn from comparing comments on different types of homework on the two questionnaire items (listening and reading) is that their positive comments on the quality and quantity of the homework assignments were not absolute but conditional.

Fill-in-the-blanks. An overall finding of the study, in terms of the effectiveness and helpfulness of the fill-in-the-blanks homework assignments, is that this type of homework was not effective and helpful for the third semester students (see Chapter Four). The students found the fill-in-the-blanks homework very easy, and they prefer more challenging homework assignments. For example, they commented that they only look up the meaning of specific words to fill the blank and not for the whole meaning of a passage, and they mentioned that this type of homework is a waste of time.

Multiple-choice (MC). An overall finding of the study is that the students, as expressed in their comments, had mixed feelings about MC homework assignments. Thus, in spite of the fact that all students agreed (based on their comments) that both MC listening and reading were effective and helpful types of homework assignments they received during the third semester, their comments on the quality and quantity of the homework assignments reveal that their positive responses were not absolute but conditional. An analysis of the comments made by students indicates that the participants found the MC homework assignments effective because they knew that the final DLPT listening and reading proficiency assessments are in the multiple-choice format. For instance, student suggestions that teachers should design homework assignments based on the DLPT5, or that homework should include oral reports on news events or cultural issues, show that the students' focus is on the final written and oral proficiency tests rather than on learning for the sake of learning. For example, one participant wrote that "It [MC homework] prepares students to take in as much information as they can and answer DLPT questions", and another student wrote, "Because the DLPT is multiple-choice" (see Appendix G).

A descriptive analysis of the overall findings indicates that the third semester's homework assignments need to be properly designed and prepared before being given to the students.

Constructed-response (CR). An analysis of findings of the study, based on the participants' opinions about the most helpful types of homework assignments, indicates that students have a positive opinion about the constructed-response homework assignments.

An examination of the participants' comments indicates that only a small percentage of the comments were negative, the majority of the students had a positive view of the CR homework assignments. While the students had highly positive opinions of the CR homework assignments, they also highlighted some issues that mirrored their expectations and understanding of the actual effect of the CR homework assignments on their language learning. For instance, they believe that CR basically is translation, therefore, they found it not very effective. Students also commented that CR is not like the DLPT in format, therefore, spending too much time on this type of homework is a waste of time, or they commented that most CR was poorly constructed and made it difficult for them to complete the tasks and they found it very time consuming.

Research on Cultural Topics. An overall descriptive analysis of the students' comments revealed that they believed research on cultural topics, when used as a homework assignment, would help them to improve their knowledge about the target language and better prepare for the OPI. All three types of the research on cultural topics as homework assignments (reading, writing, and speaking) received positive responses from the students.

Students' positive comments on research on cultural topics mirror their understanding of the effective role of awareness of cultural aspects in language learning. In contrast with the above positive comments, the negative comments made by 52 of the participants suggest that almost half of the participants in the study either were not aware of the important role of culture in language learning, or they believed that learning about the target culture would not help them pass the final DLPT and OPI. For instance, comments like "Learning about culture will not help them in their job as linguists," [or] "learning about culture is busy work and a waste of time, and it will not help them to pass the DLPT", indicate that they do not have a correct understanding of culture.

A Combination of Two or Three Types of Homework Assignments. A descriptive analysis of the participants' comments on a combination of two or three types of homework assignments reveals that their major reason for having mixed opinions (see chapter 4) about this type of homework assignment was that they thought a combination of two or three types of homework meant longer assignments and that they would have to spend even more time to complete their homework, therefore, they found this type of homework to be busy work, time consuming, a waste of time, and something that took time away from their independent study time.

Another reason for students' mixed opinions (see Chapter 4) about a combination of two or three types of homework assignments is that students have a low opinion of fill-in-the-blanks and transcription. The participants pointed out that a combination of translation and summarization was helpful, but a combination of transcription and fill-in-the-blanks was not. Some of the participants commented that the effectiveness and helpfulness of a combination of two or three types of homework depends on how the

assignments are arranged, and they were concerned about dealing with poorly arranged homework assignments as well. Overall, the study reveals that the students believe a combination of two or three types of homework assignments, if they are well designed and include translation with multiple-choice or constructed-response will be effective and helpful to them.

Research Question Two

Students recommended several kinds of homework assignments. The descriptive analysis of students' explanations about the suggested homework shows that their recommendations are based on their experiences with the current types of homework assignments they are given, and they reflect a desire to address problematic issues. For instance, students explained that with the limited time that they have after school and after performing their daily military duties and dealing with personal necessities, they would like to have a reasonable amount of homework so that they could have more time for independent study rather than spending all their study time completing their homework assignments.

Students' other recommendations include homework containing authentic materials, or homework that is like the DLPT in format. Students believe that homework should help them to learn less new vocabulary more easily. Students would like to have a reasonable amount of homework with only enough new words that it would be possible to learn them while completing the assignments.

Students' explanations regarding their suggestions about homework also include the issue of the feedback that they received during the third semester which was neither constructive, nor consistent, because the homework assignments were either too difficult

or too long, and because the instructors didn't have enough time to give them feedback, therefore, the students pointed out that receiving constructive feedback on homework assignments would be beneficial for third-semester students.

A descriptive analysis of the students' observations about the issue of the lack of "feedback" on their homework assignments reveals that their recommendations directly relate to issues such as the amount and the level of difficulty of the homework assignments that they receive. That is, the homework needs to be reasonable in amount, so that the students may devote quality time to it, and so that the instructors may have enough time to provide constructive feedback.

Based on the researcher's nine years of teaching experience and direct observations, simply providing feedback to students, even on a regular basis, is not very effective or helpful. That is, if the given feedback is not followed up (please see definition of terms p. 19), there is no guarantee that students will learn from the feedback. Consequently, the time that instructors spend providing feedback for students will be wasted. As a result, both teachers and students, over time, will become less serious about the importance of feedback.

Recommendations for Research and Practice

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study was to elicit students' feelings and opinions regarding the homework assignments that are used during the third semester of the UPF language course at DLIFLC. The researcher's ultimate goal was to learn about the source of students' complaints about homework to be able to recommend possible solutions to UPF's administrators. The results of this study indicate that students found only some

types of homework assignments (seven types) effective and beneficial for the third semester. For example, 61.12% of the participants either found homework with fill-in-the-blank assignments ineffective or extremely ineffective (38.9% ineffective and 22.22% extremely ineffective) for the third semester.

The findings show that students had mixed feelings and opinions about the effectiveness and helpfulness of transcription, research on cultural topics for writing and reading, and a combination of two or three types of homework assignments. Participants' opinions about the remaining types of homework assignments (MC, CR, translation, and research on cultural topics for speaking) were highly positive.

This study elicited important evidence on homework issues such as amount, level of difficulty, quality of homework assignments, and quality of feedback on those assignments. The following are some implications for future practice:

1. Amount of homework: Although the majority of participants strongly felt that translation, multiple-choice, constructed-response, and research on cultural topics for speaking as homework assignments are effective and helpful for third-semester students, they also commented that there is too much homework, and it doesn't leave any time for independent study and sometimes even to take care of personal needs. Based on the students' comments and suggestions, and the fact that only the department chair decides how much homework students must have, it is recommended that within each department a homework committee be established in order to solve this problem by involving all team members in deciding how much daily homework is reasonable and beneficial for the third-semester students.

Having a committee of teaching team members in each department in charge of homework for students will encourage collaboration regarding homework assignments among teaching team members because, 1) they teach students on a regular basis, 2) they correct homework assignments regularly, 3) they have more contact with students and instructors, and 4) they are aware of students' daily class activities and performance. Having a homework committee in each department will actively involve the teaching team in decision making about the homework, and it will also be easier for both students and instructors to contact and share ideas with the committee members than with the department chair.

2. Level of difficulty: The qualitative results of this study indicate that one of the participants' concerns was the level of difficulty of the third semester's homework assignments, however, since the beginning of the third semester, the students may not be fully prepared for difficult assignments, it would be reasonable that the homework provider(s) begin with less difficult assignments and gradually introduce the students to more difficult ones. It should be noted that students who reach the third semester are not all at the same language level, nor are they equally motivated. Starting with less difficult homework assignments would encourage the less motivated students to develop stronger self-efficacy and to believe in their ability. Based on the researcher's nine years of first-hand observation and experience, many of the third-semester students still feel uncertain about being able to pass the final oral (OPI) and written (DLPT5) assessments and suffer from low self-esteem. Assigning too much homework and

assignments that are too difficult will not encourage the less motivated students nor will it guarantee their success in the final evaluation.

3. **Quality of homework assignments:** The number of students enrolled in a class usually will reduce to almost half by the time they reach the third semester of the course because the students who don't perform well will be dismissed and leave the school, or they may either be recycled (transferred to a lower level class within the departments) or be assigned to another language in a different language school. However, in either case, this reduction gives instructors more time to correct fewer homework assignments. Thus, since the quality of homework assignments in form and content was one of the students' concerns, it would be reasonable if the homework provider(s) would focus more on the form (types of homework assignments that students found more beneficial) and on the content (authentic materials, or free of language errors) of the third-semester's homework instead of on the amount of homework to be assigned. With less homework, it would be easier for the homework provider (s) to focus on these areas (form and content) and make the assignments more meaningful. Higher quality homework (authentic, interesting content, up-to-date topics, and types of homework that students found beneficial) would lead students to quality learning, capture their attention, encourage them to pursue interesting topics and search for more information on their own.
4. **Quality of Feedback:** Even with good homework and feedback, teachers need to follow up on the feedback to maximize the likelihood that students will learn from the feedback and not repeat their mistakes in the future. In addition to the above

recommendations, it would be beneficial if a section could be added in the students' ESQ to elicit their opinions about the third-semester homework assignments. The ESQ could provide valuable information to the administrators and instructors which could be used to reduce, if not eliminate entirely, the kind of problems that students pointed out in this study. The special section on the third-semester homework could include questions such as:

- How do students feel about the effectiveness and helpfulness of the third-semester homework assignments?
- What are students' opinions about the quality of the third-semester homework assignments?
- Does the amount of third-semester homework leave them time for independent study?
- Do students regularly receive feedback on their homework assignments?
- How beneficial is the feedback that students receive from their instructors?
- Do the instructors take follow-up actions to try to ensure that students don't repeat their previous mistakes?

The allocated section for homework would also provide the opportunity to learn what students think about possible improvements in the existing types of homework assignments, and/or to find out about other types of homework that students may suggest. The most beneficial part of allocating a section about homework in the ESQ would be that students' opinions would be collected on a regular basis because within every few months a group of students will graduate and automatically participate in the End-of-Course Student Questionnaire (ESQ).

The collected information through the ESQ is valuable and carries less bias than the ISQ because students respond to the ESQ after the final oral and written proficiency tests (OPI and DLPT5); while after responding to the ISQ, they still are in the school and they may not feel free to be completely frank in providing feedback. That is, when students respond to the ESQ, they are not worried any more about their grades, facing their teachers, and dealing with the school rules and authorities, and they feel free to share their opinions and experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was focused on homework assignments used only during the third semester in a single school (UPF) at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. To increase the validity of the study, further research is strongly recommended that would include a larger sample size within the DLIFLC for a broader generalization of the findings. For broader generalization of the findings of this study, it would be beneficial to conduct a larger study at UPF that would include all third-semester students in the six existing departments.

Lessons Learned

The most surprising finding of the qualitative analysis was the lack of reasonable adjustment between the amount of homework and the time available to the students. Although 100% of the participants (n=108) in this qualitative study believed that homework is a part of their language learning, only 33.33% of them found 1 ½ to 2 hours of homework reasonable and the remaining participants 66.67% agreed on one hour or less to spend on their homework assignments.

Another interesting finding of this study is that only 2.78% of the participants preferred to complete their homework assignments in a group, while 83.33% of them

were more comfortable completing their homework assignments individually, and the remaining participants (12.96%) preferred to complete their homework assignments either individually or as a group.

Conclusion

The researcher's intention in designing this study was to 1) identify sources of students' complaints, 2) report students' opinions and feelings about third semester homework (the results indicate that some of the current types of homework assignments (fill-in-the-blanks) were found ineffective and not helpful to the third-semester students), and 3) make recommendations to improve third-semester homework (please see p. 125).

The overall results of this study indicate that most of the current types of homework, with some adjustments in the amount, difficulty, and quality of the assignments, can be helpful, effective, and beneficial to the third-semester students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument: Questionnaire

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument: Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to learn about students' feelings and opinions regarding the homework assignments that are used during the third semester of the UPF language course at the DLI. The collected information will be analyzed and, based on the findings of the study, recommendations will be made to UPF administrators.

1. Overall, how effective have the third-semester homework assignments been in helping you to learn Persian Farsi?

Please indicate how effective they were overall by circling the appropriate description on the scale below, and use the space below to explain your answer. For example, if assignments were very effective, what was it about them that made them very effective?

Extremely effective ineffective	very effective	effective	not very ineffective
---------------------------------------	-------------------	-----------	-------------------------

Please explain:

.....

2. How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

For each type of homework below please indicate how effective it was by circling the appropriate description on the scale provided and use the space below to explain.

a. Transcription

(Listening)

Extremely effective	very effective	effective	not very effective	Extremely ineffective
------------------------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------	--------------------------

Please

explain:.....

b1. Translation**(Listening)**Extremely
effectivevery
effective

effective

not very
effectiveExtremely
ineffective

Please

explain:.....

.....

b2. Translation**(Reading)**Extremely
effectivevery
effective

effective

not very
effectiveExtremely
ineffective

Please

explain:.....

.....

c1. Fill-in-the-blanks**(Reading)**Extremely
effectivevery
effective

effective

not very
effectiveExtremely
ineffective

Please

explain:.....

.....

c2. Fill-in-the-blanks**(Listening)**Extremely
effectivevery
effective

effective

not very
effectiveExtremely
ineffective

Please

explain:.....

.....

d1. Multiple-Choice (MC)**(Listening)**Extremely
effectivevery
effective

effective

not very
effectiveExtremely
ineffective

Please

explain:.....

.....

d2. Multiple-Choice (MC)**(Reading)**

Extremely effective very effective effective not very effective Extremely ineffective

Please explain:.....

e1. Constructed Response (CR)**(Listening)**

Extremely effective very effective effective not very effective Extremely ineffective

Please explain:.....

e2. Constructed Response (CR)**(Reading)**

Extremely effective very effective effective not very effective Extremely ineffective

Please explain:.....

f1. Research on cultural topics**(Reading)**

Extremely effective very effective effective not very effective Extremely ineffective

Please explain:.....

f2. Research on cultural topics**(Writing)**

Extremely effective very effective effective not very effective Extremely ineffective

Please explain:.....

 .

F3. Research on cultural topics**(Speaking)**Extremely
effectivevery
effective

effective

not very
effectiveExtremely
ineffective

Please

explain:.....

.....

g. A combination of two or three types of homework such as:

- transcription and translation (listening and reading)

- filling blanks, translation, and summarization (listening and reading)

Extremely
effectivevery
effective

effective

not very
effectiveExtremely
ineffective

Please

explain:.....

.....

3. How much time do you think is reasonable for students to spend per day on homework?

Please circle only one response.

2 hours

1 ½ hours

1 hour

1/2 hour

no time at all

4. Do you prefer homework assignments that require individual work or group work or both?

Please circle one response and explain your choice.

a) Individual work,

.....

.....

b) Group

work:.....

.....

c) Both:

.....

.....

5. Rank the following types of homework assignments from most helpful (1) to least helpful (7) to your language learning?

← Translation

← Transcription

← Fill-in-the-blanks

← Multiple-choice (MC)

← Constructed Response (CR)

← Research on cultural topics

← Combination of two or three types of homework (e.g., transcription and translation, or filling blanks, translation, and summarization)

6. In your opinion, can the homework assignments be improved?

Please circle Yes or No, then answer the follow-up question.

(Yes) Please explain

how.....

.....

(No) Why

not?.....

.....

7. What other types of homework do you think would be beneficial in the third semester and why?

Please explain.....

.....

8. Please check any types of homework from the list below that you may or may not have had during the third semester, but that you would like to have because you think they can significantly help you learn Persian Farsi.

☐

Homework that is a little challenging.

☐

Homework that includes translation and transcription.

☐

Homework that is at my language level.

☐

Homework for which I receive constructive feedback.

☐

Homework that helps to improve my listening and reading comprehension.

☐

Homework that contains cultural information.

☐

Homework that is fun to do.



Homework that includes authentic learning materials.

9. Do you regularly receive adequate feedback from your instructors on your homework assignments?

Please circle Yes or No, then answer the follow-up question.

(Yes) Please explain how

often.....

.....

(No) Please explain why

not?.....

.....

10. How would you evaluate the feedback you received?

Please circle the appropriate description on the scale below and explain.

Extremely

very

effective

not very

Extremely

effective

effective

effective

ineffective

Please explain:

.....

.....

APPENDIX B**Letter of Informed Consent**

APPENDIX B

Letter of Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a study being conducted by Mr. Jahangir G. Saravani. Mr. Saravani has taught Persian Farsi at DLIFLC for nine years and is a graduate student in the field of Instructional Leadership at Argosy University-San Francisco Bay Area (SFBA). Your cooperation in this study will help him to collect necessary data to complete his dissertation work for a Doctor of Education degree. Before you decide whether or not to participate in this study, please read this letter, listen to Mr. Saravani's oral presentation about the study, and ask questions if there is anything that you do not understand.

The purpose of this study is to learn about students' feelings and opinions about the effectiveness of the homework assignments that are used during the third semester in the UPF language course at DLI. In the End-of-Course Student Questionnaire (ESQ), which you will fill out at the end of the course, you will have another opportunity to provide input about the course, but there are only a few items that ask about homework. The survey that is part of the current study looks at third-semester homework in depth.

If you agree to participate in the study you will complete a brief questionnaire about the homework assignments. It should take you about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your honest response to the questions will help the researcher to complete his study on the effectiveness of the third semester's homework assignments in this school. Your responses will also be reported anonymously to the administrators of the UPF School, however, you should know that there are no promises or guarantee of changes to the school's homework policy or homework assignments as a result of this study since any changes are up to the schools' administrators.

If you decide to take part in this study, you need to know that the participation is completely voluntary and that you can withdraw from completing the survey questions at any time by informing the researcher. You should know that there will be minimum risk to you for participating in this study. You will not receive

payment for participation in this study. You will, however, have the satisfaction of knowing that you are participating in a study that could be beneficial to the DLIFLC and the Defense Foreign Language Program and, therefore, you are encouraged to participate in this research as fully as you can.

You also need to know that any information you provide in this study will be handled confidentially and no names will be used in any report about the study. Furthermore, your signed consent form will be kept confidential as well and saved in a double-locked cabinet by the researcher for three years, and after that the researcher will destroy all the information that you provided for this study. You should also know that this is an entirely anonymous survey and you are not required to include your name on the survey paper.

Your participation in the study and your responses to the survey questions will not have any effect on your final proficiency test DLPT5 or OPI scores, nor will it become part of your military record.

Thank you for your participation. If you should have questions about the research at any time, please contact:

Jahangir G. Saravani, M.A.

Assistant Professor, DLIFLC

Telephone number: (831) 915-7391

E-mail: jgiahi@gmail.com

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Statement

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Statement

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I freely agree to participate in this study. I know what I will be asked to do and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

Please sign the consent form.

Signature -----

Print Name -----

Date -----

APPENDIX D**DLIFLC: IRB Approval**



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER
AND PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY
MONTEREY CA 93944-3236

January 24, 2013

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
U.S. Army Assurance: DOD A20209

Sylnovie Merchant, Ph.D.
IRB Chair
Argosy University
1005 Atlantic Ave.
Alameda, CA 94501

Dear Dr. Merchant:

On behalf of the U.S. Army Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), I am writing to formally indicate our awareness of a research project proposed by Mr. Jahangir G. Saravani, a graduate student (School of Education) at Argosy University.

This research project, tentatively entitled *Student Feedback on the Homework Assignments Used during the Third Semester of the Undergraduate Persian Farsi Basic Course at the Defense Language Institute* has been reviewed and approved by the DLIFLC Scientific & Ethics Review Boards and by Dr. Jielu Zhao (DLIFLC Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education). Dr. Zhao has endorsed the use of DoD military personnel as participants in Mr. Saravani's dissertation research project.

I have been informed that the Argosy IRB will conduct the review and maintain institutional oversight of this project. Once the Argosy IRB has completed its review of the project, I ask that a copy of the outcome of that review (and approval number) be send to me so we may maintain a folder on this project in our file of current research projects.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

J. Jeffrey Crowson, Ph.D.
IRB Chair
Professor, Educational Research
(831) 242-3788
jeffrey.j.crowson.civ@mail.mil

APPENDIX E

Argosy University: IRB Approval



ARGOSY UNIVERSITY®

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA CAMPUS

January 14, 2013

Jahangir Giahi Saravani
62 Mar Vista Drive
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Jahangir,

Thank you for addressing the IRB concerns and making the corrections to your application. Your application is now approved.

If you make changes in your protocol, you must use the form in the application. Changes must be signed by the chair and submitted for review before any changes are instituted.

Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely,

Synovie Merchant, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Argosy University, San Francisco Bay Area

APPENDIX F

Students' Comments for Department A

Students' Comments on the Types of Homework Assignments from Survey

Question 1: Overall, how effective have the third-semester homework assignments been in helping you to improve your language proficiency?

a. Transcription (Listening Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness
101	Not very effective	I am somewhat indifferent to 3 rd semester HW. At this point in the course everything is so specific that one passage for HW really isn't going to do much for me. I don't think it's a waste, I just think in order to succeed you must go above and beyond what is given for HW.
102	Extremely effective	The assignments expose me to vocabulary and topics I would not study on my own.
103	Not very effective	At the level of fluency of 3 rd semester, HW does not fine tune the problems I have as a student.
104	Effective	The assignments focus on the types of language that we see on the tests; also they aren't too long and allow time for self-study.
105	Effective	The assignments are decent for practicing purposes alone.
106	Not very effective	Most of the assignments followed a central theme (i.e. political, environment); however, the amount of HW material introduced seemed to do more harm than good.
107	Very effective	Helped me practice and study.
108	Not very effective	Because the HW is very random, the questions most of the time are confusing and most importantly time consuming. When I could put it to better use studying on my own.
109	Effective	I believe that the members of my teaching team take the time to create HW related to our level of study.
110	Very effective	I think the HW given by my teaching team was very helpful; however, I sometimes wish they all be more challenging.
111	Effective	I believe they were effective because they were short and allowed me to self-study but also provided a starting point for self-study.
112	Not very effective	Took a lot of time and they never were related to what we were talking about in class.
113	Effective	They mostly reinforce what we went over that day.
114	Not very effective	I find some effective because they are similar to DLPT questions.

115	Effective	I believe that the assignments we have received that are around a level 2-2+ are the most effective in preparing us for the DLPT.
116	Effective	Some times when HW was related to our curriculum it helped.
117	Not very effective	It varies based on who made it.
118	Effective	
119	Effective	The HW was relevant to the level we have learning at, and helped to reinforce what we had learned in class.
120	Effective	Sometimes the HW is too difficult to understand and I cannot complete it on my own.
121	Not very effective	The HW seems to be randomly assigned by a different teacher each night. The HW was rigidly required to be completed and took a lot of time for me every night.
122	Not very effective	
123	Effective	At this point in the course I feel we should have less HW in order to focus more on self-study.
124	Effective	
125	Effective	For the most part they have been good except for when they require too much time.
126	Effective	The assignments insured I received extra practice in my language but seemed a bit off topic.
127	Effective	It's hit or miss, when assignments are very in high level, it makes them ineffective. We are in semester 3 and get bombarded all day long, L-3 nouns at night is unnecessary.
128	Effective	I wish that our HW was more related to DLPT.
129	Effective	They are usually effective but not always relevant.
130	Not very effective	I believe that some HW is good to have but sometimes the amount of HW we receive take away from us studying vocabulary.
131	Effective	
132	Effective	In the beginning of 3 rd semester, the HW was very effective, now I think it is too time consuming and I feel I could use my time more effectively.
133	Effective	Giving people level 3 passages after tests is not effective.
134	Not effective	I do not seem to take anything away from HW.

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

a. Transcription (Listening Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Not very effective	It is too time consuming. If the course was longer, I might see the benefit of it but we have such short time here that our time would be better used elsewhere.	-
102	Not very effective	We don't use transcription often, if at all.	-
103	Not very effective	Transcription is extremely time consuming and is not conducive to learning the language of the expected pace.	-
104	Effective	Not practiced often. The focus has been on comprehension without taking notes or transcribing.	-
105	Not very effective	If I cannot understand a word, I have a great difficulty trying to write it.	-
106	Effective	Helped me to think fast and write fast.	+
107	Extremely effective	Writing what I hear helps with spelling, listening, and comprehension.	+
108	Extremely ineffective	You basically copy the whole time you do not understand what you hear.	-
109	Extremely ineffective	Transcription is time consuming and very limited on the amount of time available for listening.	-
110	Extremely ineffective	Nonexistent.	0
111	Extremely ineffective	We have not had any transcription HW since early first semester.	-
112	Extremely ineffective	Took away too much time.	-
113	Effective	It made you understand what you're listening to.	+
114	Not very effective	Don't feel like this helps me much anymore, it's just time consuming.	-
115	Very effective	Transcription is effective in helping me make sure that I understand what is being said in the passage.	+
116	Effective		0
117	Extremely ineffective	Waste of time in my opinion. If you can listen to a passage and translate it effectively, there is no problem. I know it helped others, I personally found it to be unhelpful.	-
118	Effective		0

119	Not very effective	Took a lot of time for what is was.	-
120	Not very effective		
121	Not very effective	It was usually above my level and not related to the unit vocabulary or unit test I was preparing for.	-
122	Not very effective	Not effective, not test oriented, doesn't promote understanding of material.	-
123	Not very effective		0
124	Not very effective	It was only effective in the 1 st semester because in 3 rd semester it is better to translate.	-
125	Not very effective	I did not like spending time learning on a word or two at a time. I learn better grasping the full picture.	-
126	Effective	I feel transcription of some passages were not helpful, if the speed was too fast, most were acceptable though.	-
127	Not very effective	Transcription is frustrating and I consider it at this late in the course to be busy work.	-
128	Extremely effective	Helped sharpen ears.	+
129	Effective		0
130	Very effective	Again having a few sentences to transcribe is okay, but when you're transcribing a passage that takes an hour, it takes away from studying vocabulary.	-
131	Not very effective	This is mostly busy work for us and it doesn't help to improve listening 3 rd semester. This is better for beginning levels to ensure one hears all the sentences.	-
132	Not very effective		0
133	Not very effective	I believe the time for transcribing is past by 3 rd semester.	-
134	Extremely ineffective	I learn nothing from transcriptions; unfortunately they also take the longest.	-
Total			5+ 22- No 6

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

b 1. Translation (Listening Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Extremely effective	Both "b1 and b2" are the primary way I learn the language.	+
102	Very effective	This is the main goal so it is allotted the most effort and time. I don't always hear correctly through.	+
103	Effective	It gives students the opportunity to translate and comprehend the passage as opposed to simply answering questions.	+
104	Effective		0
105	Effective	Problems would arise when I couldn't understand what was said. If I cannot understand a word to spell it, it is difficult to translate it.	+
106	Extremely effective	This has always been my most troubling, the more listening the better.	+
107	Extremely effective	Challenges me to try to understand more than if I had clues from questions.	+
108	Not very effective	Verbal translation is the best because you can't really translate completely what someone has said in person into English.	-
109	Effective		0
110	Effective	Direct translation is rare however may be helpful. Extremely difficult.	+
111	Effective		0
112	Effective	Got to practice, but it would have been better to find my own things to practice with.	+
113	Effective	This is very hard to do. Sometimes summarizing is much easier.	+
114	Effective	I find immediately translating passages helpful.	+
115	Very effective		0
116	Very effective		0
117	Very effective	Difficult and sometimes time consuming, but very helpful though, I preferred summarizing, same difficulty less time.	+

118	Effective		0
119	Effective	Helped remember both grammar and vocabulary.	+
120	Effective		0
121	Not very effective	Could have been more effective if it were related to vocabulary of the unit we were studying.	-
122	Very effective		0
123	Effective		0
124	Extremely effective		0
125	Effective		0
126	Very effective	These types of HW give practice to multiple skills.	+
127	Very effective	Word pre word, but EEI's is very beneficial.	+
128	Extremely effective	Most helpful, helped me to improve listening comprehension.	+
129	Effective		0
130	Effective	A few translations are okay.	+
131	Very effective	Helps us to find the best way to sort through cultural phrases and make them make sense to us.	+
132	Effective	Helpful, but very time consuming.	+
133	Effective	Translating short passages is effective. Anything longer than one minute is not.	+
134	Very effective		0
Total			19+ 2- No 13

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

b 2. Translation (Reading Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Extremely effective		0
102	Very effective	You have to know the meaning of everything because it is all given to you.	+
103	Effective	It gives students the opportunity to translate and comprehend the passage as opposed to simply answering questions.	+
104	Effective		0
105	Very effective	There were many assignments where this was required and it seemed to help in understanding.	+
106	Very effective	Just practice, my only wish is that it was more toward reinforcement and less toward new words and topics.	+
107	Extremely effective	Challenges me to try to understand more than if I had clues from questions.	+
108	Extremely effective		0
109	Very effective	This HW helps with flooring the general structure of sentences in Farsi.	+
110	Very effective	Also helpful and more likely easier.	+
111	Very effective	Authentic articles helped to be subject to word that is used that we may not have seen before.	+
112	Effective	Got to practice, but it would have been better to find my own things to practice with.	+
113	Effective	This is very hard to do. Sometimes summarizing is much easier.	+
114	Effective		0
115	Extremely effective		0
116	Very effective		0
117	Very effective		0
118	Effective		0

119	Very effective	Helped remember both grammar and vocabulary.	+
120	Effective		0
121	Effective	Could have been more effective if it were related to vocabulary of the unit we were studying.	+
122	Very effective		0
123	Very effective		0
124	Very effective	It's effective to translate the general idea rather than word for word.	+
125	Very effective		0
126	Very effective	These types of HW give practice to multiple skills. Also let me see the words.	+
127	Very effective	Word pre word, but EEI's is very beneficial.	+
128	Extremely effective	Helped resolve issue of sentence word order.	+
129	Effective		0
130	Effective	A few translations are okay.	+
131	Very effective	The more you do this the faster you get at comprehending harder passages and your reading improves greatly.	+
132	Effective	Helpful, but very time consuming.	+
133	Very effective		0
134	Very effective		0
Total			19+ No 15

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

C 1. Fill-in-the-blanks (Reading Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Extremely ineffective	I just listen for specific words. I don't ever spend the time to completely understand the passage.	-
102	Extremely ineffective	I don't recall doing this in the third semester.	-
103	Not very effective	Fill in the blanks is very subjective and therefore does not generally help me.	-
104	Extremely ineffective	How are students supposed to know what the author intended?	-
105	Not very effective	There was too many times where multiple or no words provided fit with the blanks. It was more frustrating than helpful.	-
106	Extremely ineffective	I am just very bad at these. I know the words; it's just that multiple words seem not to fit.	-
107	Extremely effective	Helps me understand context.	+
108	Not very effective		0
109	Effective	Although this is rarely seen.	-
110	Not very effective	Just seems useless to me.	-
111	Effective		0
112	Effective		0
113	Not very effective	I find this to be more of a time waster.	-
114	Extremely ineffective	Don't think this helps at all.	-
115	Very effective		0
116	Not very effective		0
117	Not very effective	Didn't find it helpful.	-
118	Effective		0
119	Effective	Best for early work but became too easy later on.	-
120	Not very		0

	effective		
121	Effective		0
122	Extremely ineffective	Just as ineffective as transcription because does not promote understanding.	-
123	Not very effective	More useful for end of semester 1, beginning semester 2.	-
124	Not very effective	Only effective for learning grammar.	-
125	Not very effective		0
126	Effective	Some were helped, but others weren't done to the multiple uses of words.	+
127	Effective	Word pre word, but EEI's is very beneficial.	-
128	Not very effective	Helped resolve issue of sentence word order.	+
129	Not very effective	We don't do much Fill-in-the-blanks reading.	-
130	Effective	Effective when it comes to prepositions.	+
131	Not very effective	Busy work.	-
132	Very effective	Helps with difficult passages and vocab.	+
133	Very effective	No point on DLPT to use this for reading.	-
134	Effective		0
Total			5+ 19- No 10

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

C 2. Fill-in-the-blanks (Listening Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Extremely ineffective	I just listen for specific words. I don't ever spend the time to completely understand the passage.	-
102	Not very effective	I find myself just searching for the blank, not understanding.	-
103	Not very effective	Fill in the blanks is very subjective and therefore does not generally help me.	-
104	Effective		0
105	Very effective	Encouraged precise listening and it was easier to pinpoint where the answer was instead of blindly, very productive.	+
106	Not very effective	It's basically matched down transcribing.	-
107	Extremely effective	Helps me understand context, also helps with listening and spelling.	+
108	Extremely ineffective		0
109	Very effective	Rarely included HW.	-
110	Extremely ineffective	Even more useless.	-
111	Effective		0
112	Effective		0
113	Not very effective	I find this to be more of a time waster.	-
114	Not very effective	I don't listen to understand when I do this.	-
115	Very effective		0
116	Not very effective		0
117	Not very effective		0
118	Effective		0
119	Effective		0
120	Effective		0

121	Effective		0
122	Extremely ineffective		0
123	Not very effective	More useful for end of semester 1, beginning semester 2.	-
124	Very effective		0
125	Effective		0
126	Very effective	It allowed me to hear a word and see its usage.	+
127	Effective		0
128	Extremely effective	Helps sharpen ears.	+
129	Effective		0
130	Not very effective		0
131	Not very effective	Not on final test and it's not helpful to see a transcript with most of the words when you start the passage.	-
132	Effective	Helps with difficult passages and vocab.	+
133	Extremely effective		0
134	Effective		0
Total			5+ 10- No 19

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

d 1. Multiple-Choice (MC) (Listening Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	
			+
			-
101	Effective	Good practice for the tests.	+
102	Effective	The questions are usually related to understanding.	+
103	Effective	It prepares students to take in as much information as they can and answer DLPT questions.	+
104	Effective		0
105	Effective	Somewhat representative of DLPT.	+
106	Effective	It's great test prep, but it gives me too much of an idea of what the passage is about.	+
107	Extremely effective	Similar to actual test.	+
108	Very effective		0
109	Extremely effective	When written new these match DLPT questions.	+
110	Extremely ineffective	Similar to tests.	+
111	Extremely ineffective	Because the DLPT is multiple choices, these helped prepare for the test.	+
112	Effective		0
113	Effective	This is more of how the tests are for us.	+
114	Not very effective	Most similar to DLPT.	+
115	Very effective	Multiple choice questions are the most effective and beneficial practice we have done because the DLPT is in this format.	+
116	Effective		0
117	Effective	Easy to guess sometimes and sometimes very unclear.	+
118	Effective		0
119	Extremely ineffective	This format also reflects our tests.	+
120	Effective		0
121	Effective		0
122	Extremely ineffective	Helps a lot with tests.	+

123	Effective	Most effective near end of course for DLPT to prep.	+
124	Very effective		0
125	Effective		0
126	Effective	Most could be easily competed but still gave practice.	+
127	Extremely effective	The English Q & A must be written very well.	+
128	Extremely effective	Prepares you for tests as well as DLPT.	+
129	Effective	When a question and its answers are well made, the assignment is effective.	+
130	Extremely effective	Helps for the DLPT.	+
131	Extremely effective	A lot of teachers don't know how to make good questions. I think at least a basic course should be given to them so they can make better questions.	+
132	Effective	Good practice for DLPT.	+
133	Extremely effective	DLPT format.	+
134	Very effective		0
Total			24+ No 10

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

d 2. Multiple-Choice (MC) (Reading Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Effective		0
102	Effective	The questions are usually related to understanding.	+
103	Effective	It prepares students to take in as much information as they can and answer DLPT questions.	+
104	Effective		0
105	Very effective		0
106	Very effective		0
107	Extremely effective	Similar to actual test.	+
108	Extremely effective		0
109	Extremely effective	When written new these mimic DLPT questions.	+
110	Extremely effective	Similar to tests.	+
111	Extremely effective	Because the DLPT is multiple choices, these helped prepare for the test.	+
112	Effective		0
113	Effective	They prepare us better.	+
114	Very effective	Most similar to DLPT.	+
115	Very effective	.	0
116	Effective		0
117	Effective	Easy to guess sometimes and sometimes very unclear.	+
118	Effective		0
119	Extremely effective	This format also reflects our tests.	+
120	Effective		0
121	Effective		0
122	Extremely effective	Helps a lot with tests.	+

123	Very effective	Most effective near end of course for DLPT to prep.	+
124	Very effective		0
125	Effective		0
126	Effective	Most could be easily competed but still gave practice.	+
127	Extremely effective	The English Q & A must be written very well.	+
128	Extremely effective	Prepares you for tests as well as DLPT.	+
129	Effective		0
130	Extremely effective		0
131	Very effective		0
132	Effective	Good practice for DLPT.	+
133	Extremely effective	DLPT format.	+
134	Very effective		0
Total			17+ No 17

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

e 1. Constructed Response (CR) (Listening Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Very effective	Both e1 and e2 are good because they require more complete understanding of the material.	+
102	Extremely effective	You have to understand in order to write the answer.	+
103	Very effective	It allows students to format their own answer and gives them the opportunity to justify certain answers containing ambiguity.	+
104	Extremely effective		0
105	Effective	You didn't have to fully understand, but only understand the main idea.	+
106	Extremely effective	It shows what I know and how well I know it; the questions just need to be more specific.	+
107	Extremely effective	Able to explain what I hear and think.	+
108	Effective		0
109	Extremely ineffective	These must be exactly as the "Grader" interprets, which could be different for each student.	-
110	Very effective	Good due to understanding the meaning of a passage.	+
111	Effective	Because the DLPT is multiple choices, these helped prepare for the test.	+
112	Effective		0
113	Effective	When we get them, they are good because it is easier to see what we get and what we don't.	+
114	Effective	Can help as long as I don't have to spend an hour coming up with answers.	+
115	Effective	.	0
116	Effective		0
117	Very effective	This is the hardest type of question to answer; it requires that you have more understanding of target language.	+
118	Effective		0
119	Not very effective		0

120	Effective		0
121	Very effective	It was usually above my level and not related to the unit vocabulary or unit test, I was preparing.	+
122	Very effective	Is good because doesn't allow room for "crutches" like multiple choice does.	+
123	Effective		0
124	Very effective	Helps you pull out EELs.	+
125	Effective		0
126	Effective	These forced closer attention to the passage and stopped guessing.	+
127	Effective	Depends, lower level passages yes, but higher level can be more frustrating.	+
128	Extremely effective	In the beginning, helps you learn to pick out EELs.	+
129	Effective		0
130	Very effective	Let's you get the whole idea.	+
131	Effective	Makes you understand it better.	+
132	Effective	I can put it in my own words.	+
133	Effective		0
134	Not very effective		0
Total			20+ 1- No 13

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

e 2. Constructed Response (CR) (Reading Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Very effective		0
102	Extremely effective	You have to understand in order to write the answer.	+
103	Very effective	It allows students to format their own answer and gives them the opportunity to justify certain answers containing ambiguity.	+
104	Extremely effective	The constructed response is the best practice for real life opportunity of our training here.	+
105	Effective		0
106	Extremely effective	It shows what I know and how well I know it; the questions just need to be more specific.	+
107	Extremely effective	Able to explain what I think.	+
108	Effective		0
109	Extremely ineffective	These must be exactly as the "Grader" interprets, which could be different for each student.	-
110	Very effective	A bit less good because it's too easy.	-
111	Effective	Because the DLPT is multiple choices, these helped prepare for the test.	+
112	Effective		0
113	Effective	When we get them, they are good because it is easier to see what we get and what we don't.	+
114	Effective	The answer is already written, why I need to write it again.	-
115	Effective		0
116	Effective	Labeled me articulate why I got the answer.	+
117	Very effective	This is the hardest type of question to answer; it requires that you have more understanding of target language.	+
118	Effective		0
119	Very effective		0
120	Not very		0

	effective		
121	Not very effective	It was usually above my level and not related to the unit vocabulary or unit test, I was preparing.	-
122	Very effective		0
123	Effective		0
124	Very effective		0
125	Effective		0
126	Effective	These forced closer attention to the passage and stopped guessing.	+
127	Effective	Depends, lower level passages yes, but higher level can be more frustrating.	+
128	Extremely effective	Helps reinforce vocabularies.	+
129	Effective		0
130	Very effective		0
131	Effective		0
132	Effective	I can put it in my own words.	+
133	Effective		0
134	Not very effective		0
Total			13+ 4- No 17

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 1. Research on Cultural Topics (Reading Comprehension)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Effective	All 3 do a good job in familiarizing yourself with culture and specific areas and sites within the country. This allows for better understanding of passages and materials that we come across.	+
102	Extremely effective	We use new vocabulary and learn beyond the language.	+
103	Not very effective	It offers no aid into learning the language itself, just gives students insight in culture.	-
104	Very effective	This is obviously necessity for a complete understanding of the language.	+
105	Not very effective		
106	Effective	It would be even better if I wasn't already trying to learn the language, but culture can help with understanding certain topics.	+
107	Extremely effective	Teaches us about culture of Iran.	+
108	Not very effective	It would be better if our teachers just taught us about cultural topics instead of us learning false information and then being corrected.	-
109	Effective		
110	Extremely effective	Used critical thinking skills to find words and use the language.	+
111	Very effective	Because the DLPT is multiple choices, these helped prepare for the test.	+
112	Not very effective	Most of the in-depth cultural stuff is way too complicated and takes up too much time.	-
113	Effective	Makes us figure out more about the target culture.	+
114	Very effective	I learn a lot of background information.	+
115	Not very effective	Researching cultural topics during the third semester makes focusing on preparing for the DLPT extremely difficult.	+
116	Not very effective	I need to study for DLPT. I don't have time for this bull crap.	-

117	Very effective	It is helpful for cultural aspects, but not as much for the language itself.	-
118	Extremely effective	Learning about the culture helps you identify with the language.	+
119	Effective		
120	Not very effective		
121	Effective		
122	Extremely ineffective	Culture is really good to know and is important to understanding; it's just the structure of how it's taught at DLI that is highly ineffective.	-
123	Very effective	More of this in semester 2.	-
124	Effective		
125	Effective		
126	Effective	Word usage in this context makes them easier to understand.	+
127	Effective		
128	Extremely effective	Can't understand a language without understanding its culture.	+
129	Effective		
130	Effective	Immersing yourself in the culture helps with learning the language.	+
131	Not very effective		
132	Effective		
133	Effective		
134	Very effective	Effective as short assignments. Culture projects put too much pressure and leave students without time.	+
Total			15+ 7-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 3. Research on Cultural Topics (Speaking)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Effective		
102	Extremely effective	Again new vocabulary, but also we form our own original ideas.	+
103	Very effective	Not only does it give students more practice with speaking, they also get to utilize certain vocabulary they learned while researching.	+
104	Very effective		
105	Not very effective		
106	Very effective	It is great, if we have to do it in Farsi only.	+
107	Extremely effective		
108	Effective		
109	Very effective	Pronunciation practice for OPI.	+
110	Effective	Time consuming; we basically need to be led by the hand on these.	-
111	Very effective	Forced to prepare to use language in a different way (public speaking).	+
112	Not very effective		
113	Effective	The best way for reporting on culture, I think.	+
114	Effective		
115	Effective		
116	Effective		
117	Effective	It is helpful for cultural aspects, but not as much for the language itself.	+
118	Extremely effective		
119	Effective		
120	Not very effective	Cultural topics will not help us in our job as a linguist, or helps us pass the DLPT5.	-
121	Effective		

122	Very effective	Speaking is always helpful because it enables you to hear yourself with the language.	+
123	Effective	All: mine useful near beginning of course and middle to test and expand knowledge.	+
124	Not very effective		
125	Effective	Not enough time to really focus on it with all the HW given to us.	-
126	Effective	Word usage in this context makes them easier to understand, but the added speaking enhanced my familiarity.	+
127	Effective		
128	Extremely effective	Strengthens speaking, confidence.	+
129	Very effective	Having to speak your way around words and subject, you are not completely familiar with is always helpful.	+
130	Very effective		
131	Not very effective		
132	Effective		
133	Very effective		
134	Very effective		
Total			12+ 3-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

g. A combination of two or three types of homework

- Translation and transcription (Listening and Reading)

- Filling blanks, translation, and summarization (Listening and Reading)

Department A

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
101	Extremely ineffective	Too long! My God. I always get my HW done as fast as possible so I can work on things that I am specially struggling with.	-
102	Extremely effective	It's the only way to learn every aspect of any language.	+
103	Very effective	It hits the required topics, very effectively; however, the amount each night in 3 rd semester should be decreased to allow for self-study.	+
104	Very effective	Our HW assignments always include that a listening and reading that are related. That seems to be working for me.	+
105	Effective		
106	Very effective	It changes it up so one cannot develop a pattern and simply get used to what is expected.	-
107	Extremely effective	Get practice in different ways or methods.	+
108	Not very effective	If you don't understand what they said, you can't fill it in or read it so you are stuck.	-
109	Very effective	This tests you in different areas.	+
110	Extremely effective	We always do this and it is always helpful.	+
111	Very effective	Forced to use language in different ways.	+
112	Effective		
113	Effective	It is always better to pair them, that way we are not focused only on one thing.	+
114	Not very effective	These are mostly busy work. Summary is good though.	-
115	Very effective		
116	Effective	Allowed me to utilize more skills and helped with	+

		comprehension.	
117	Extremely effective	You get more out of the mixed HW.	+
118	Effective		
119	Not very effective	The mixed or combo works took a long time, but weren't as effective as other methods.	-
120	Not very effective		
121	Effective		
122	Not very effective		
123	Very effective	Multiple choices plus a small translation.	+
124	Effective	Translation is only effective in 1 st semester.	-
125	Effective		
126	Very effective	More practice is always more help.	+
127	Effective	Again, can be more frustration than effective.	-
128	Extremely effective	Strengthens essential aspects of languages.	+
129	Extremely effective	Being made to think in different ways in a short amount of time is something I have found to be helpful.	+
130	Not very effective		
131	Effective		
132	Effective		
133	Very effective	It can help, but feels like busy work.	+
134	Effective		
Total			15+ 7-

APPENDIX G

Students' Comments for Department B

Question 1: Overall, how effective have the third-semester homework assignments been in helping you to improve your language proficiency?

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness
173	Effective	FLO translation was only effective when the teacher explained the translations thoroughly, but the assignment used very advanced words that we had not yet learned.
174	Not very effective	They are ineffective because it depends on the effort of the student to go the extra mile.
175	Effective	Assignments helped with reading and listening in general, but no focus on vocabulary. Random vocabulary was given in a chart for reference of the assignment, but not related to quiz and test.
176	Effective	Considering that 3 rd semester is focused on building proficiency, it feels the HW has done a fine job of introducing to various topics and their associated vocabulary.
177	Not very effective	They are not very effective because they are usually extremely easy compared to our course work and don't really better our understanding in any way.
178	Not very effective	3 rd semester I have never spent more than 20 minutes, I only do it so that I don't get into trouble.
179	Effective	Sometimes it seems that we receive too much HW in very different subjects and that makes it difficult to absorb vocabulary. If the subjects were more condensed, it would be more beneficial.
180	Not very effective	Most of the assignments were above our level of language and seemed to be for busy work.
181	Not very effective	
182	Not very effective	They inhibited the learning process for me. I am able to get more out of self-studying what I know I need to study and work on instead of what we had been given.
183	Effective	The assignments are effective when presented in a manner that outlines vocab to be learned from the assignment and is relevant to the material covered through the day.
184	Effective	Reading passages are very useful, but often the listening passages are well above our level and to some extent are actually harmful.
185	Effective	
186	Not very effective	HW hardly deals with what we learned in class.
187	Not very effective	The passages are often very difficult and hard to handle on my own. Not enough time is used in class to cover the material on some days. I often set frustrated with the passages taking too

		much time and give up on trying understanding it by myself.
188	Effective	They reinforce what we learned.
189	Not very effective	Many times the teachers don't post assignments that they said they would.

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

Transcription (Listening Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Comments on Homework Effectiveness	+ -
173	Effective	Have not had any for 3 rd semester, but in 2 nd semester it helped to make a mental connection.	+
174	Effective	We have had no transcription HW. I believe it would be valuable.	+
175	Very effective	Improved listening and handwriting and spelling. Handwriting is faster.	+
176	Extremely effective	Transcription has helped me to develop my ability to discern individual work from a string of dialogue and have sharpened my ears.	+
177	Effective	Effective in narrowing down to specific words, but I still cannot spell the new words.	+
178	Not very effective	I feel that these exercises are a complete waste of time. They take multiple listening and by the time I am done, I have wasted an hour on one passage. There are many words I do not know and misspelling these words does not help me learn them.	-
179	Extremely effective	I feel that transcription has been the most valuable method of listening comprehension.	+
180	Very effective	They were very annoying and time consuming, but they helped because we had to pick out the words and spell them correctly and use correct grammar.	+
181	Effective	Would be most effective with vocabulary that we are expected to know.	+
182	Very effective	This was a practice I would use on my own that I have found very effective when listening as well as reading. We have only had a few of them, but they are very effective.	+
183	Not very effective		0
184	Very effective	Personally I believe transcription is very effective. The only concern I have is that it takes 30 minutes to an hour. If it is done well so it consumes a vast majority of our time, it's no good.	+
185	Effective		0

186	Not very effective	If I have a copy of the transcription to proof read my work that would help. Long transcriptions assignments are too much work.	-
187	Very effective	Transcription helps a lot because even when I don't catch a word correctly, in the course of translating, I can find the right word/spelling.	+
188	Not very effective	It takes too much time, without getting much out of it.	-
189	Not very effective	Many times listening is never posted.	-
Total			11 + 4- No 2

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

b 1. Translation (Listening Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Extremely effective	Supplemental audios have been all authentic and it helped greatly to go over these in class during HW review.	+
174	Effective	This is our primary job as linguists and we could probably use more of this type of HW.	+
175	Effective	Listening translation has allowed me to focus more proficient in translating complete meaning rather than word-by-word meaning.	+
176	Effective	Effective, but time consuming is written. I can understand it, but it takes at least three times as long to write it.	+
177	Effective	Effective in narrowing down to specific words, but I still cannot spell the new words.	+
178	Effective	Slightly more beneficial because it allows me to write summarizations.	+
179	Very effective	The method is effective, but sometimes the sources aren't well adjusted to everyone's capacity.s	+
180	Effective	Somewhat effective because it requires knowing the vocabulary and comprehension of the language.	+
181	Not very effective	Usually based off of transcriptions.	-
182	Effective	Transcription works better for listening because translation allow for a broad approach.	+
183	Very effective		0
184	Very effective	I feel that this is also effective because it encourages us to learn the overall passage instead of having to hear every single word. It helps us with comprehension.	+
185	Effective		0
186	Effective	But only if gist, not word for word.	+
187	Very effective	Translation helps a lot because even when I don't catch a word correctly, in the course of translating, I can find the right word/spelling.	+
188	Extremely effective	It made us understand what we were listening to.	+
189	Not very effective		0
Total			13+ 1- No 3

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

b 2. Translation (Reading Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Extremely effective	Mirbaha helped to raise our proficiency level.	+
174	Very effective	It requires knowing every word in a sentence.	+
175	Very effective	I have to look up the words I do not know and it helps with memorization. Also spelling, I learn how to use context.	+
176	Effective	Persian Farsi is unique in that the meaning of the language can be easily lost if only written and not spoken. Reading helps in learning new words, but it's not effective for developing comprehension.	+
177	Effective	Effective, but time consuming is written. I can understand it, but it takes at least three times as long to write it.	+
178	Extremely effective	My favorite because if I don't know the word it is right there in front of me and I don't mind spending a lot of time on these kinds of passages because it end up learning all of the words.	+
179	Very effective	This will always be effective, but I feel that more knowledge of vocab would be equally as reinforcing.	+
180	Effective	Somewhat effective because it requires knowing the vocabulary and comprehension of the language.	+
181	Effective	Shortest passages for HW would be more effective, especially when including unseen vocab.	+
182	Very effective	Forces you to look into what you don't know.	+
183	Effective		0
184	Very effective		0
185	Effective		0
186	Effective	But only if gist, not word for word.	+
187	Effective		0
188	Extremely effective	It made us understand what we were reading.	+
189	Not very effective	Mirbaha is great.	-
Total			12 1- No 4

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

c 1. Fill-in-the-blank (Reading Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Not very effective	For me these were too easy because usually had to do with grammar.	-
174	Not very effective		0
175	Not very effective	Unless it is for grammar and vocabulary. Fill-ins don't really help if a word bank is not provided; the word could have several possibilities.	-
176	Effective	Give no bank of words to choose from, it is effective because a word bank often simplifies the task to only needing to understand grammar on global meaning, one or the other.	+
177	Extremely ineffective	Silly busy work.	-
178	Not very effective	Don't rally help much, usually don't know the words they are using and don't know what is going on.	-
179	Effective	This is usually too easy.	-
180	Extremely ineffective	Waste of time if not enough information was given.	-
181	Not very effective		0
182	Extremely ineffective	No use for this type of HW.	-
183	Not very effective		
184	Not very effective	I feel like there is really a waste of time because it does not require as much of a comprehension skill as globally translating.	-
185	Not very effective		0
186	Not very effective	Feel as if it's a waste of time.	-
187			0
188	Not very effective		0
189			0
Total			1+ 9- No 6

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

c 2. Fill-in-the-blank (Listening Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Effective	When it is an authentic passage this is a useful tool.	+
174	Effective	It is easier to follow the listening. This is usually for a difficult passage.	+
175	Not very effective	This is the same as reading fill-ins, but given in audio it's more transcription than anything, but it takes little effort. It is more beneficial for earlier weeks.	-
176	Very effective	Familiarizes me to the method of sentence construction for complex thoughts.	+
177	Extremely ineffective	Silly busy work.	-
178	Extremely ineffective	Not sure if I have ever been come across one in HW, but they are ridiculous.	-
179	Effective	When we do this, it makes the whole meaning of the passage irrelevant when we only listen for bits and pieces.	-
180	Not very effective	Waste of time if not enough information was given.	-
181	Effective		0
182	Not very effective	Too many possibilities with this.	-
183	Not very effective		0
184	Not very effective	I feel like there is really a waste of time because it does not require as much of a comprehension skill as globally translating.	-
185	Not very effective		0
186	Not very effective	Again, a waste of time.	-
187			0
188	Not very effective		0
189			0
Total			3+ 8- No 6

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

d 1. Multiple-Choice (MC) (Listening Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Effective	Makes it easier to listen for the answer and prepares us for multiple choice tests like DLPT, but this doesn't help me with comprehension	+
174	Effective	Useful for practicing for DLPT, not for learning.	+
175	Very effective	Useful for DLPT practice makes my listening more focused and detail-orientated.	+
176	Effective	Focus a deep understanding if the Q & As are constituted properly.	+
177	Very effective	If questions are well written it pushes us to understand tone and implication.	+
178	Extremely ineffective	I feel these types of assignments help because they are in similar structure to our tests.	+
179	Very effective	Preparation for DLPT.	+
180	Extremely ineffective	Most of the choices usually are not worded correctly or there are two answers that could be correct, but we are told to "Choose the most correct answer" this is ridiculous.	-
181	Effective	Helps with test preparation, quick to get.	+
182	Very effective	This is how we are tested, so practicing this is very beneficial.	+
183	Very effective	Multiple choice is a very good opportunity to homework to familiarize students with the test formats.	+
184	Extremely ineffective	We have to work beyond the passage and understand.	-
185	Not very effective	We have a lot of poorly built multiple choice questions lately that seem to have a lot of logical overlap and subjectivity .	-
186	Effective	Close to what the DLPT will be like but you need people who are tried for making better Multiple choices.	+
187	Not very effective	Most MC we are given is poorly constructed in my opinion, I mean the questions and answers options not the passages themselves.	-
188	Very effective	It resembled the test.	+
189	Very effective	Helps with DLPT.	+
Total			13+ 4-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

d 2. Multiple-Choice (MC) (Reading Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Effective	Makes it easier to listen for the answer and prepares us for multiple choice tests like DLPT, but this doesn't help me with comprehension.	+
174	Effective	Useful for practicing for DLPT, not for leaning.	+
175	Very effective	Makes me search for details, helps to practice DLPT.	+
176	Not very effective	Too easy.	-
177	Very effective	If questions are well written it pushes us to understand tone and implication.	+
178	Extremely effective	I feel these types of assignments help because they are in similar structure to our tests.	+
179	Very effective	DLPT practice!	+
180	Extremely ineffective	Most of the choices usually are not worded correctly or there are two answers that could be correct, but we are told to "Choose the most correct answer" this is ridiculous.	-
181	Effective		0
182	Very effective		0
183	Very effective	Multiple choice is a very good opportunity for homework to familiarize students with the test formats.	+
184	Extremely effective	We have to work beyond the passage and understand.	+
185	Not very effective	Interpretation in such a way that seems more a measure of our ability to read the author's mind than actually understand the language. When I can understand a Farsi passage in its entirety, but the English questions make no sense. It's apparent something is wrong.	-
186	Effective	Close to what the DLPT will be like but you need people who are tried for making better Multiple choices.	+
187	Not very effective	Most MC we are given is poorly constructed in my opinion, by this I mean the questions and answers options not the passages themselves.	-
188	Very effective	It resembled the test.	+

189	Very effective	Helps with DLPT.	+
Total			11+ 4- No 2

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

e 1. Constructed Response (CR) (Listening Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Very effective	Very difficult but useful, especially when reviewed during HW review.	+
174	Extremely effective	This is good for demonstrating actual understanding of the passage.	+
175	Effective		0
176	Very effective	Require deep understanding to answer accurately and thoughtfully.	+
177	Effective	Requires true comprehension, but is difficult to write an answer while listening.	+
178	Effective	Usually more difficult, however still beneficial because I need listen completely and answer.	+
179	Very effective	This reinforces the thought process and out of the box responses, I find it very useful.	+
180	Extremely effective	Because we hear it, comprehend it, and can give all details about the passage.	+
181	Not very effective		0
182	Effective	Allows for you to use background knowledge which can differ from actual text.	+
183	Very effective		0
184	Very effective		0
185	Effective	This depends on whether the questions are well constructed or not.	+
186	Effective	Works my general understanding of the passage.	+
187	Effective	Most CR we are given is poorly constructed in my opinion, by this I mean the questions and answers options not the passages themselves.	+
188	Effective	It resembled the test.	+
189	Effective	It's good when it's actually posted.	+
Total			13+

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

e 2. Constructed Response (CR) (Reading Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Very effective	Very difficult but useful, especially when reviewed during HW review.	+
174	Effective		0
175	Effective		0
176	Effective	Can sometimes be as easy as translating sentence word for word.	+
177	Very effective	Very effective because it looks for comprehension.	+
178	Effective	Usually more difficult, however still beneficial because I need listen completely and answer.	+
179	Very effective	This reinforces the thought process and out of the box responses, I find it very useful.	+
180	Extremely effective	Because we hear it, comprehend it, and can give all details about the passage.	+
181	Not very effective		0
182	Effective	These were always very detail oriented and very beneficial for ensuring understanding.	+
183	Very effective		0
184	Very effective		0
185	Effective		0
186	Effective	Works my general understanding of the passage.	+
187	Effective	Most MC we are given is poorly constructed in my opinion, by this I mean the questions and answers options not the passages themselves.	+
188	Effective	It resembled the test.	+
189	Very effective	Helps to enforce understanding.	+
Total			11+ No 6

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 1. Research on Cultural Topics (Reading Comprehension)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Very effective	Although done mostly in English, this is effective because it is a topic we can choose and become familiar enough to present it.	+
174	Very effective	Learning background knowledge is helpful in understanding the language.	+
175	Effective		
176	Very effective	Introduces me to new and unfamiliar topics and it related vocabulary.	+
177	Extremely effective		
178	Extremely effective	Not only are these interesting, but very beneficial. I feel that background knowledge is extremely helpful when applied to tests.	+
179	Extremely effective	I feel that the more cultural information I have, the better I will be able to understand language and phrases.	+
180	Very effective	Gives us a strong background and knowledge of the language, culture, and country.	+
181	Effective		
182	Not very effective	These were always very detail oriented and very beneficial for ensuring understanding.	+
183	Very effective		
184	Extremely effective		
185	Effective		
186	Effective	Too much time should not be spent on this.	-
187	Very effective		
188	Effective	It resembled the test.	+
189	Not very effective		
Total			8+ 1-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 2. Research on Cultural Topics (Writing)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Extremely effective	Translating what we learn in Farsi gives us a chance to learn new vocab on our own and create sentences on our own; easier to remember.	+
174	Very effective	Writing in the target language is helpful for learning to produce the language.	+
175	Effective		
176	Very effective	Gives me an opportunity to formulate thoughts usefully and accurately.	+
177	Extremely effective	Writing is a very time consuming way to prove understanding; we can do much more research if we aren't forced to dress it up.	+
178	Extremely effective	Not only are these interesting, but very beneficial. I feel that background knowledge is extremely helpful when applied to tests.	+
179	Extremely effective	I am fully capable of writing Farsi at this point, and it is easy to do, but sometimes is a waste of time	+
180	Very effective	Gives us a strong background and knowledge of the language, culture, and country.	+
181	Not very effective		
182	Not very effective		
183	Effective		
184	Extremely effective		
185	Effective		
186	Effective	Too much time should not be spent on this.	-
187	Very effective		
188	Effective		
189	Not very effective		
Total			7+ 1-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 3. Research on Cultural Topics (Speaking)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Extremely effective	When we have to vocalize the vocabulary we learn from our research topic, it puts it into long-term memory. It helps me to remember when I practice speaking on one topic over and over.	+
174	Very effective	Speaking is the key.	+
175	Very effective	Very helpful to practice speaking and of course learning the culture.	+
176	Extremely effective	Any speaking practice is extremely effective, vocabulary; grammar, idioms, etc. must be used under pressure of conversation, forcing one to think on their fact.	+
177	Very effective	As a discussion, it is effective, but dressing up the information for an oral presentation is a waste of time.	+
178	Extremely effective	Not only are these interesting, but very beneficial. I feel that background knowledge is extremely helpful when applied to tests.	+
179	Extremely effective	It helps to be able to do this as we may one day need to be able to speak about it. If we can do it in Farsi, we can do it in English.	+
180	Very effective	Helps with speaking and raising our confidence levels.	+
181	Effective		
182	Effective	Background knowledge is essential.	+
183	Very effective		
184	Extremely effective		
185	Effective		
186	Effective	Helps me practice my speaking.	+
187	Very effective		
188	Effective		
189	Effective	Once a day we talk about daily news.	+
Total			11+

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

g. A combination of two or three types of homework

- Translation and transcription (Listening and Reading)

- Filling blanks, translation, and summarization (Listening and Reading)

Department B

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
173	Extremely effective	Variety is the spice of life. My brain needs it like my lungs need oxygen.	+
174	Extremely effective	Filling in blanks is not especially useful. Translation and transcription is the key.	+
175	Very effective	Transcribing and translation help to fully understand a passage completely.	+
176	Very effective	Very effective, but new vocabulary must be limited so as to not totally affect the students' comprehension.	+
177	Not very effective	I feel like I get a true feel for the text when I'm reading and listening and working in two languages.	+
178	Extremely effective	Same exercise is bad alone and combining them could be awful.	+
179	Extremely effective	I fully support transcription; I feel that transcription has boosted my Farsi abilities.	+
180	Effective	Makes the student have to be more involved and focused.	+
181	Not Very effective		
182	Effective		
183	Extremely effective	Going through HW is much more helpful. When working to understand one passage fully rather than understanding only a few key ideas.	+
184	Effective	The only reason I rate this lower is because of the amount of time that it consumes. It becomes counterproductive.	-
185	Not Very effective		
186	Not Very effective	I need to be able to work on other things. I'm lacking not spend hours on the above when I'm already in class all day.	-
187	Very effective		
188	Effective	Time consuming and didn't get a lot out of it.	-
189	Very effective	Forces students to fully comprehend the passage.	+
Total			10+ 3-

APPENDIX H

Students' Comments for Department C

Question 1: Overall, how effective have the third-semester homework assignments been in helping you to improve your language proficiency?

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations
190	Effective	Good new words, but HW is sometimes busy work.
191	Extremely ineffective	
192	Not very effective	
193	Effective	
194	Effective	Introduces a few new words every night.
195	Not very effective	The tasks do not reinforce what we are leaving in class.
196	Effective	They encourage exploration and attempt to expand the language on their own.
197	Effective	HW is presented in efficient amounts.
198	Effective	They are good in that, I am learning new concepts and new words daily. However, I would suggest that they related the HW to the day's contents more.
199	Effective	The difficulty level given is sufficient and challenging to increase comprehension.
200	Very effective	In comparison to second semester, I have been able to improve.
201	Extremely ineffective	Unrelated to course materials. Repeats simple vocabulary or introduces too much new vocabulary.
202	Not very effective	After seven hours of class, HW goes in one ear and out the other.
203	Not very effective	
204	Effective	Provided a baseline of content.
205	Very effective	
206	Very effective	It's a lot better than curriculum HW.
207	Effective	We could go quickly into authentic materials and tests without much practice. This could have been more effective.
208	Effective	The extra listening has helped.

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

a. Transcription

(Listening Comprehension)

Department C

190	Very Effective	This helps with the ear-hand coordination; also helps reading if you can write it, you can read it.	+
191	Extremely ineffective		0
192	Not very effective	We simply write down what we hear. We don't actually comprehend what we are hearing, and we are forced to listen to it piece by piece, and even if we recognize a single word we don't hear it as a whole audio clip. It is very time consuming as well.	-
193	Not very effective		0
194	Very effective	Helps me to hear individual words better and to recognize the flow of speech better.	+
195	Effective	They force you to listen to individual words, good for vocabulary, but short passages work best.	+
196	Effective	Helps understanding word sounds and develops critical thinking in the language.	+
197	Not very effective	Transcription is a good skill, but I do not feel it helps listening because it is too long.	-
198	Extremely effective		0
199	Extremely ineffective	Don't do anything to help me learn, especially when they are too long.	-
200	Very effective		0
201	Not very effective	Lots of unknown words. Time consuming.	-
202	Not very effective	Too time consuming and is generally full of unknown vocab.	-
203	Effective		0
204	Effective		0
205	Effective		0
206	Effective		0
207	Extremely ineffective		0
208	Very effective	Solidifies my Farsi to English.	+
Total			5+ 5- No 9

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

b1: Transcription (Listening Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ - 0
190	Very effective	Depending on amount.	+
191	Extremely ineffective	We don't review it.	-
192	Effective		0
193	Very effective		0
194	Very effective	Many times doing a full translation leads me to fully understand the passage.	+
195	Very effective		0
196	Very effective	Encourages original creation or understanding.	+
197	Very effective		0
198	Very effective		0
199	Not very effective	Takes a long time to get it all.	-
200	Very effective		0
201	Very effective	Time consuming but productive.	+
202	Not very effective	So much unknown vocab that a direct translation becomes an exercise in Google searching.	-
203	Effective		0
204	Effective		0
205	Very effective		0
206	Very effective	Helps my reading.	+
207	Effective		0
208	Very effective	It's my job.	+
Total			6+ 3- No 10

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

b2: Translation (Reading Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ - 0
190	Very effective	Depending on amount.	+
191	Not very effective	Levels were all over the place.	-
192	Effective		0
193	Not Very effective		0
194	Very effective	Helps me to hear individual words better and to recognize the flow of speech better.	+
195	Effective		0
196	Not very effective	The urge to use translation serious or programs reduces the effectiveness.	-
197	Very effective		0
198	Effective		0
199	Very effective	I can visually see the whole sentence and that enables me to learn sentence structure.	+
200	Very effective		0
201	Extremely effective	Useful only when level appropriate.	+
202	Not very effective	So much unknown vocab that a direct translation becomes an exercise in Google searching.	-
203	Effective		0
204	Effective		0
205	Very effective		0
206	Extremely effective	Helps reading a lot.	+
207	Effective		0
208	Effective		0
Total			5+ 3- No 11

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

c 1. Fill-in-the-blank (Reading Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ - 0
190	Not very effective	Not for 3 rd semester.	-
191	Extremely ineffective	Not for 3 rd semester.	-
192	Not very effective		0
193	Not very effective		0
194	Very effective	Helps me to hear individual words better and to recognize the flow of speech better.	+
195	Extremely ineffective	These tasks are semi-arbitrary and do not help at all.	-
196	Very effective	Encourages creation and critical thinking.	+
197	Effective	Full translation gives better understanding.	-
198	Not very effective		0
199	Extremely ineffective	Doesn't improve ability at all.	-
200	Not very effective	Not a 3 rd semester activity.	-
201	Extremely ineffective	Too simple or too hard to complete tasks.	-
202	Effective	Good, concise, effective.	+
203	Effective		
204	Effective	Highlights new words.	+
205	Effective		0
206	Not very effective	Not in semester three.	-
207	Extremely ineffective		0
208	Not very effective	We are beyond this, it's a waste of time.	-
Total			4+ 9- No 5

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

c 2. Fill-in-the-blank (Listening Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ - 0
190	Effective	More useful as a reading and understanding task.	+
191	Extremely ineffective	Not a 3 rd semester activity.	-
192	Not very effective		0
193	Not very effective		0
194	Extremely ineffective	Listening is different from reading due to the fact you cannot just look at the passage to find the answer.	-
195	Extremely ineffective		0
196	Very effective	Develops critical listening.	+
197	Not very effective	Full translation is better for full understanding.	-
198	Very effective		0
199	Extremely ineffective	Doesn't improve ability at all.	-
200	Not very effective	Not a 3 rd semester activity.	-
201	Extremely ineffective	Too simple.	-
202	Effective	Good, concise, effective.	+
203	Not very effective		0
204	Effective	Highlights new words.	+
205	Effective		0
206	Not very effective	We did it in semester one.	-
207	Extremely ineffective		0
208	Effective	Forces precision.	+
Total			5+ 7- No 7

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

d 1. Multiple-Choice (MC) (Listening Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ -
190	Extremely effective	Helps teach multiple choice skills necessary for DLPT.	+
191	Extremely ineffective		0
192	Effective		0
193	Very effective	Prepares you for unit test and ELPT style test.	+
194	Not very effective	While effective for DLPT preparation, these are not as helpful as CR in learning Farsi.	+
195	Very effective		0
196	Very effective	Good DLPT practice and critical thinking.	+
197	Extremely effective	DLPT preparation.	+
198	Very effective		0
199	Extremely effective	Good training for DLPT to familiarize with it.	+
200	Very effective		0
201	Effective	Simulated DLPT.	+
202	Effective	Good, concise, effective.	+
203	Very effective		0
204	Not very effective	Easy to guess.	-
205	Extremely ineffective	That's what's on the DLPT.	+
206	Very effective	Helps prepare for test.	+
207	Effective		0
208	Extremely effective	This is what we are tested on, we need practice.	+
Total			11+ 1- No 7

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

d 2. Multiple-Choice (MC) (Reading Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ -
190	Extremely effective	Helps teach Multiple choice skills necessary for DLPT.	+
191	Not very effective	Basic vocab Farsi matches to English.	+
192	Effective		0
193	Very effective		0
194	Extremely ineffective	While effective for DLPT preparation, these are not helpful as CR in learning Farsi.	+
195	Very effective		0
196	Very effective	Good DLPT practice and critical thinking.	+
197	Very effective	DLPT preparation.	+
198	Very effective		0
199	Very effective	Good training for DLPT to familiarize with it.	+
200	Very effective		0
201	Effective	Simulated DLPT.	+
202	Effective	Good, concise, effective.	+
203	Very effective		0
204	Not very effective	Easy to guess.	-
205	Extremely effective	That's what's on the DLPT.	+
206	Very effective	Sure is.	+
207	Effective		0
208	Extremely effective	This is what we are tested on, we need practice.	+
Total			11 + 1- No 7

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

e 1. Constructed Response (CR) (Listening Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ - 0
190	Very effective	If you can answer, you understand.	+
191	Effective		0
192	Effective		0
193	Effective	Make it so that you understand the passage completely.	+
194	Very effective	Easy to do and takes no time, answer usually sticks out.	+
195	Very effective		0
196	Very effective	Makes use of reasoning.	+
197	Very effective	Allows demonstration of understanding.	+
198	Effective		0
199	Very effective	Lets me explain my understanding more accurately.	+
200	Very effective		0
201	Effective	Takes time.	+
202	Effective	Assuming the vocab has been covered.	+
203	Very effective		0
204	Effective		0
205	Effective		0
206	Effective	Helps with EEIs.	+
207	Effective		0
208	Effective	No longer tested on CR in listening, most comes on Multiple Choice.	+
Total			10+ No 9

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

e 2. Constructed Response (CR) (Reading Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ - 0
190	Very effective	If you can answer, you understand.	+
191	Effective		0
192	Effective		0
193	Effective	Make it so that you understand the passage completely.	+
194	Effective	Easy to do and takes no time, answer usually sticks out.	+
195	Very effective		0
196	Very effective	Makes use of vocabulary knowledge.	+
197	Very effective		0
198	Very effective		
199	Very effective	Lets me explain my understanding more accurately.	+
200	Very effective		0
201	Not very effective	Takes lots of time.	-
202	Effective	Assuming the vocab has been covered.	+
203	Very effective		0
204	Effective		0
205	Effective		0
206	Very effective	Helps with EEIs.	+
207	Effective		0
208	Not very effective	No longer tested on CR in listening, most comes on Multiple Choice.	+
Total			8+ 1- No 9

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 1. Research on Cultural Topics (Reading Comprehension)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ -
190	Effective	If we had more time would be helpful.	-
191	Extremely ineffective		
192	Very effective		
193	Effective	Helps understand the culture.	+
194	Very effective	As well as adding more words our vocabulary opens up more of Persian culture.	+
195	Not very effective		
196	Very effective	Better understanding of Iran.	+
197	Effective		
198	Very effective		
199	Extremely ineffective		
200	Not very effective	This activity is not focused on.	-
201	Extremely ineffective	No application in class.	-
202	Effective	Self-study is the best study.	-
203	Very effective		
204	Very effective	Abstract thinking is stimulated.	+
205	Very effective		
206	Effective	Helps to understand Iran more.	+
207			
208	Not very effective	Waste of time. I want to focus on vocab.	-
Total			5+ 5-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 2. Research on Cultural Topics (Writing)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	
			+
			-
190	Not very effective	Unless in TL, but is busy work.	-
191	Extremely ineffective		
192	Not very effective		
193	Not very effective		
194	Not very effective	It's not as helpful as reading.	-
195	Not very effective		
196	Very effective	Uses the language to create and develop.	+
197	Effective		
198	Very effective		
199	Extremely ineffective		
200	Not very effective	This activity is not focused on.	-
201	Extremely ineffective	No application in class.	-
202	Effective	Self-study is the best study.	-
203	Not very effective		
204	Very effective	Abstract thinking is stimulated.	+
205	Very effective		
206	Effective	Good to practice writing.	+
207		N/A	
208	Not very effective	Waste of time. I want to focus on vocab.	-
Total			3 + 6-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 3. Research on Cultural Topics (Speaking)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ -
190	Extremely effective	Any speaking is good. Language is a spoken art.	+
191	Extremely ineffective		
192	Effective		
193	Effective		
194	Extremely effective	Anytime speaking is involved it is very helpful.	+
195	Effective	They force you to learn culturally relevant vocabulary.	+
196	Extremely effective	Encourages use of the language.	+
197	Very effective		
198	Very effective		
199	Very effective	Speaking helps me in every area as well.	+
200	Not very effective	This activity is not focused on.	-
201	Effective	Improves speaking.	+
202	Effective	Self-study is the best study.	+
203	Effective		
204	Very effective	Abstract thinking is stimulated.	+
205	Very effective		
206	Very effective	Helps speaking a lot.	+
207	Effective	N/A	+
208	Effective	OPI great, but culture topic all in Farsi taking time away from studies.	+
Total			11 + 1-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

g. A combination of two or three types of homework

- Translation and transcription (Listening and Reading)

- Filling blanks, translation, and summarization (Listening and Reading)

Department C

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Explanations	+ -
190	Not very effective	Too much of the same, not as helpful as separate.	-
191	Extremely ineffective		
192	Not very effective		
193	Effective		
194	Effective		
195	Not very effective		
196	Very effective	Uses more of the language learned.	+
197	Not very effective		
198	Extremely effective	Understanding and translating Farsi in your own words in a manner that a teacher can confirm validity is essential and helpful to learning Farsi.	+
199	Very effective	Good balance.	+
200	Very effective	This does not prepare for the test.	-
201	Effective	Time consuming but effective.	+
202	Very effective	Too time consuming.	-
203	Effective		
204	Effective		
205	Not very effective	More tedious and just makes me want to finish it but I don't feel like I learn as much.	-
206	Very effective		
207	Not very effective		
208	Effective		
Total			4+ 4-

APPENDIX I

Students' Comments for Department E

Students' Comments on the Types of Homework Assignments from Survey

Question 1: Overall, how effective have the third-semester homework assignments been in helping you to improve your language proficiency?

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations
135	Not very effective	By the 3rd semester having more time to study vocabulary is surely needed and more important, the HW only wastes time.
136	Effective	Most of the 3 rd semester HW was authentic, material which was very helpful in solidifying grammar and sentence structure and introducing us to native speakers speaking for native Farsi speakers.
137	Very effective	It was effective in the fact that it got me to actually look at Farsi, but on a negative. It was a bit too much at times and that time would have been better used for actual studying.
138	Not very effective	The HW assignments did not do what was learned in class because they did not reinforce specific vocabulary or introduce important concepts; they felt like busy work.
139	Very effective	It wasn't much, but it was enough to be able to dissect and really get a lot out of.
140	Not very effective	It was very repetitive and did not push us.
141	Not very effective	The HW given to us during the 3 rd semester was just extra busy work. They were not related to any of our unit exams, nor did they help me study. Sometimes we didn't even review the HW.
142	Not very effective	It doesn't force me to study, instead it's a set amount of time in my day that I am forced to do busy work.
143	Not very effective	They feel just like busy work because the team must put HW up, whereas allowing us to study vocabs and our deficiencies would be more beneficial.
144	Not very effective	HW this late in our program tends to only get in the way of studying.
145	Effective	At this point, simply learning Farsi is really just about immersing us; lately the HW isn't exactly authentic material, but it is good enough.
146	Not very effective	Mostly busy work; very broad topics that did not relate to daily studies.
147	Not very effective	I found the HW to be just busy work. It sometimes had useful words, but mostly just time consuming

		and useless compared to if I was able to use that time to self-study more.
148	Not very effective	Most assignments have been repeated from previous classwork or HW. It just seems like busy work that is taking away from studying learning current authentic material.
149	Not very effective	Depends on the day, it is hit and miss. I have found that curriculum tends to get recycled multiple times.
150	Not very effective	The HW was either too advanced for it to be beneficial or too easy, yet time consuming for us to get any self-studying done.
151	Not very effective	While in the beginning of the 3 rd semester HW gave that final push towards the 2nd level with the language.
152	Effective	They've been relatively simple but geared towards increasing vocabulary.
153	Not very effective	A large majority of 3 rd semester HW assignments just practiced execution of skills we already knew and were solely a method of keeping accountability that soldiers did the work.
154	Effective	They are good for practice; they haven't been very good at challenging me or helping me learn new things.
155	Effective	At times the continual reinforcement can be helpful, but it feels the 3 rd semester should be about improvement not retention.
156	Not very effective	By the 3 rd semester the only improvements that needed to be made were in vocabulary which we did not receive.
157	Very effective	They work very effective for me because of the diversity of the HW which allowed me to be introduced to many new vocabularies.
158	Not very effective	Many repeated assignments, seems like they were just thrown together with no need regard for our curriculum.
159	Effective	They are too random, is level of difficulty, topic and length to be effective most times.
160	Extremely ineffective	HW was very random and followed no theme. Recommend spreading 3 rd semester into 2 week blocks that follow specific broad topics.
161	Extremely ineffective	Material feels like it is simply busy work not organized, a lot of it is material we have already done in the course.
162	Not very effective	I prefer non-tailored study. 3 rd semester I am aware of my weaknesses and would prefer to choose what to work on.

163	Not very effective	Most of the time assignments seemed like nothing more than just busy work.
164	Effective	Most of the HW which we received was useful and contained vocab that related to the subjects in that semester.
165	Extremely ineffective	Transcription is very easy, and in no way shows language proficiency.
166	Not very effective	
167	Effective	Some of the assignments have been collective but I often feel like I'm just doing busy work rather than helpful materials
168	Not very effective	It didn't help because it was redundant.
169	Not very effective	Restricts the amount of time I can study on my own, a lot of the HW is mainly just busy work.
170	Effective	
171	Extremely ineffective	Too much was given, not allowing for time to study + focus on what was needed personally.
172	Very effective	The passages are said to be similar to DLPT style materials.

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

a. Transcription (Listening Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Very effective	We rarely did transcription, but when I did, my listening greatly improved. Being required to transcribe taught us to pay better attention and more easily understand separate words.	+
136	Effective	Hearing the words and then seeing them when I write them down is good reinforcement for learning.	+
137	Effective	Maybe a little more than just effective; however, the length of some of the transcription passages were really time consuming.	+
138	Extremely ineffective	Transcription forces me to focus on every word, which is my natural inclination. In order to do better, I have to train myself to ignore words I don't know and get the gist; Transcription practice counteracts that effort and makes it more difficult for me.	+
139	Effective	In the beginning it was time consuming, but somewhat effective for being able to pick out words.	+
140	Not very effective	More of a time consumer word rather transcribes.	-
141	Not very effective	Rarely did any transcription HW, but when we did, they were very simple; I could have done it during second semester.	-
142	Extremely ineffective	Time consuming with little to new Farsi skills learners.	-
143	Not very effective	We did not receive enough material on our level for it to be an effective practice.	-
144	Extremely ineffective	Transcription is tedious and serves very little purpose in learning language in 3 rd semester.	-
145	Extremely ineffective	During the 3 rd semester, transcription is useless. It doesn't do anything but use time for studying	-
146	Effective	Helped a little with spelling and listening.	+
147	Effective	It was useful for helping with listening.	+
148	Extremely	In 3 rd semester we haven't had any transcription	-

	ineffective	HW. This has been a negative since we recently had a FLO test that required transcription.	
149	Not very effective	Transcription is only effective in the beginning to help with the learning of the alphabet.	-
150	Effective	If it was a topic we were familiar with, it was helpful, but if it was a topic we've never had before, it's pointless. If we don't even know what we're listening to, we won't learn what we're learning.	-
151	Effective	I did transcription by myself, and it helped boost my listening abilities.	+
152	Not very effective	Transcription doesn't allow me a chance to retain the material because they are long.	-
153	Extremely ineffective	Transcription is not a 3 rd semester skill set.	-
154	Not very effective	We hardly ever do transcription.	-
155	Very effective	Understanding vowel sounds is crucial to the language; although time consuming, it is very helpful.	+
156	Effective	They are effective, but very time consumptive and cause much mental-fatigue.	+
157	Not very effective	Transcription in the third semester was not very useful for me because at this point transcription felt like busy work and I rushed to finish it.	-
158	Extremely ineffective	Most transcriptions were too long and the most of us rushed through them and learned nothing.	-
159	Extremely ineffective		0
160	Extremely ineffective	We did very little transcription, but as a previous DLI student, I feel that unless you know the words transcription is not a helpful task.	-
161	Extremely ineffective	We don't do transcription.	-
162	Not very effective	By 3 rd semester transcription is not effective; I believe it should be used in earlier semesters.	-
163	Extremely ineffective	We did not do transcription.	-
164	Extremely ineffective	This is a useless tool that teachers use, transcribing a long passage into word by word rather understanding the entire passage is useless.	-
165	Extremely ineffective		0
166	Not very effective		0
167	Not very	Transcription has not helped me memorize any	-

	effective	Farsi.	
168	Effective	The only thing transcription is good for is to practice how words are spelled.	+
169	Effective	It really only helps with learning the pronunciation and spelling of words. Sometimes is a huge waste of time. A lot better ways to learn the spelling and pronunciation.	-
170	Extremely ineffective	No transcription in semester three.	-
171	Effective	Helped prepare for FLO.	+
172	Not very effective		0
Total			12+ 23- No 4

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

b 1. Translation (Listening Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Effective	Translation is very time consuming, much like transcription but it didn't seem to be as useful.	+
136	Extremely effective	This will be during the 3 rd semester. I had dozens of translation assignments that have developed my listening skills.	+
137	Extremely effective	Helps to make sense of what you hear.	+
138	Not very effective	I don't feel like I need translation practice, it is just time consuming.	-
139	Very effective	Was very good for whole understanding of passage and finding phrases.	+
140	Extremely effective	Best form of comprehension.	+
141	Effective	Helped me better understand the passage. Since I'm weak at the subject, it helped my overall understanding of the passage, but also helped me pick up words I didn't know before.	+
142	Very effective	Being able to understand and translate an entire passage helps.	+
143	Not very effective	By 3 rd semester knowing every higher level word is not necessary, where a gist will suffice.	-
144	Very effective	It's very easy to judge understanding by full translation.	+
145	Not very effective	I focus too much on trying to understand what I'm hearing to translate it end up to hearing loss.	-
146	Very effective	Good practice for listening.	+
147	Effective		
148	Extremely effective	This is usually extremely effective unless it requires knowledge of cultural topics we have not been exposed to.	+
149	Very effective	But listening passages need to grow harder as the class improves, not jump around.	-
150	Very	One of the better methods, longer passages though	+

	effective	starts to lose their effectiveness.	
151	Effective	Translation was based on understanding which is very important.	+
152	Very effective	Helps focus on important details.	+
153	Effective	Translation in the sense of paraphrasing led to overall understanding of passage, but only if in short quantities.	+
154	Effective	This is what I need to know how to do, so HW where you have to think on your own that prepares you for the DLPT is good.	+
155	Very effective	It should be done more often.	0
156	Effective	Depended on if translation was also given.	+
157	Very effective	It allowed me to learn sounds of new vocabulary.	+
158	Very effective	If the passages are less than 30 seconds.	-
159	Very effective	When the listening was not too hard, this could be some of the best practice.	+
160	Effective		0
161	Effective	Better than just answering questions.	+
162	Effective	Not word-by-word translation, but fishing is effective.	+
163	Effective	Depending on the level of the passage.	+
164	Effective		0
165	Very effective		0
166	Very effective	Translation helps us retain our attention span.	+
167	Not very effective		0
168	Effective	It does not need to be direct translation, just a general idea.	-
169	Very effective		0
170	Effective		0
171	Very effective		0
172	Very effective	Helps cement grammar and vocabulary and collegial language speech.	+
Total			23+ 5- No 8

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

b 2. Translation (Reading Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Effective	This helped us to understand sentence structure more when we went over it in class, also very time consuming.	+
136	Extremely effective	The native material we were given for HW introduced us to native phrases and speech patterns and what they look like in writing.	+
137	Extremely effective	Familiarizes you with the whole passage.	+
138	Not very effective	I feel this practice as part of third semester HW is unnecessary and time consuming.	-
139	Very effective	Also good for understanding and finding phrases.	+
140	Extremely effective		0
141	Effective	It reassured me that I understood what I was reading and helped me learn new words.	+
142	Very effective	Being able to understand and translate an entire passage helps.	+
143	Not very effective	Choosing a few words are more effective than full translation.	-
144	Very effective	It's very easy to judge understanding by full translation.	+
145	Very effective	I can get the words more easily in context. And piece together more. It helps me retain vocab.	+
146	Extremely effective	Helped with learning to understand the language.	+
147	Effective		
148	Extremely effective	Prepares us for DLPT	+
149	Very effective	Hardest tests with more vocabs are good, but using articles that reinforce the week's study are the best.	+
150	Very effective	Some teachers asked for a direct translation which most of the time is completely unhelpful. It should be the meaning of a passage not a word-to-word, what does this say.	+
151	Effective	Translation was based on understanding which is very important.	+
152	Not very effective	It is tedious and takes too much time.	-

153	Effective	Translation in the sense of paraphrasing led to overall understanding of passage, but only if in short quantities.	+
154	Not very effective	This is what I need to know how to do, so HW where you have to think on your own that prepares you for the DLPT is good.	-
155	Effective	Differing opinions among teachers cause this to be the most testing for me.	+
156	Very effective	If printed as printed labeled both vocab and spelling to be learned.	+
157	Very effective	It allowed me to see how new vocabulary is written.	+
158	Very effective	If they are less than 2 paragraphs.	+
159	Very effective		0
160	Effective		0
161	Effective	Better than just answering questions.	+
162	Effective	For me I translate reading as I'm reading by gisting full translation is not effective at this point.	+
163	Effective		0
164	Effective		0
165	Very effective		0
166	Very effective		0
167	Effective		0
168	Effective	It does not need to be direct translation, just a general idea.	+
169	Very effective		0
170	Effective		0
171	Very effective		0
172	Very effective	Helps cement grammar and vocabulary and collegial language speech.	+
Total			22 + 4- No 11

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

c 1. Fill-in-the-blank (Reading Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Extremely ineffective	It may have been more effective if given to us earlier in the course. At this point. All it does is waste of time.	-
136	Effective	We didn't have many of these and I'm not sure what is meant by Fill-in-the-blank.	-
137	Extremely effective	Makes you be sure of definitions of words and context.	+
138	Extremely ineffective	I cannot see a real-world application for this type of exercise.	-
139	Not very effective	Only looked for specific words not whole meaning of passage.	-
140	Effective	Some are effective if spoken colloquially or written colloquially.	+
141	Not very effective	They gave us fill-in-the-blanks HW on topic we didn't really understand, it was a lot of guessing game, not very helpful at all.	-
142	Extremely ineffective	I learn nothing from this, I simply play in a work that might work, but I learn nothing.	-
143	Extremely ineffective	These are time consuming, better spend time for self-studying.	-
144	Not very effective	When I fill in blanks, I don't have any comprehension for what word fits.	-
145	Extremely ineffective	We don't have assignments like that in the 3 rd semester.	-
146	Not very effective	Did not help me with the language.	-
147	Extremely ineffective	It did absolutely nothing for me but waste time.	-
148	Extremely ineffective	We haven't had any fill-in-the-blank reading HW.	-
149	Not very effective	Most students tend to just wait for the blank areas and ignore the rest.	-
150	Effective		0
151	Extremely ineffective	By 3 rd semester fill-in-the-blanks is below the students' level, and doesn't help progress.	-
152	Not very effective	Too many possible answers.	-
153	Extremely ineffective	Fill-in-the-blanks make it difficult to grasp the	-

		topic, since a chosen word is predetermined, therefore not a choice.	
154	Not very effective	Our work and level is too high to worry about filling in the blanks.	-
155	Not very effective	For a lower level grammatical tool it's amazing for a student studying higher levels it's either too easy or too hard.	-
156	Very effective		0
157	Effective	They were a little easy for the semester.	-
158	Effective	Helps you learn the gist of the sentence.	+
159	Not very effective		0
160	Effective	Fill-in-the-blanks is effective when it is about a Farsi passage in English.	-
161		We hardly had this for HW.	0
162	Effective		0
163	Extremely ineffective	We did not do this very often.	-
164	Extremely ineffective		0
165	Extremely ineffective		0
166	Effective	It is somewhat effective, but it can be detrimental to global reading skills.	+
167	Effective		0
168	Extremely ineffective	Subjective work doesn't help with any part of the language.	-
169	Not very effective	There are better ways to learn vocabulary.	-
170	Not very effective	HW creator doesn't know which part of the passage a student wouldn't understand, doesn't help.	-
171	Extremely ineffective		-
172	Not very effective		-
Total			4+ 26- No 8

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

c 2. Fill-in-the-blank (Listening Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Not very effective	I don't recall having HW like this.	-
136	Effective	These helped me focus on learning certain words.	+
137	Extremely effective	Helps with pronunciation.	+
138	Extremely ineffective	While this may be useful to increase listening skill in first semester, by 3 rd semester it seems pointless.	-
139	Not very effective		0
140	Effective		0
141	Not very effective	They gave us fill-in-the-blanks HW on topic we didn't really understand, it was a lot of guessing game, not very helpful at all.	-
142	Extremely ineffective	I learn nothing from this, I simply play in a work that might work, but I learn nothing.	-
143	Extremely ineffective	Too time consuming; we need time to study on our own.	-
144	Not very effective	I am only interested in the single word and I don't comprehend meaning.	-
145	Extremely ineffective	It forced you to listen just to answer the question and not to understand.	-
146	Not very effective	Difficult talk, hard to understand some passages which make the assignments difficult.	-
147	Extremely ineffective	Like I previously stated, time wasted.	-
148	Effective	Requires us to listen for specific words so we sometimes miss the general idea of the passage.	-
149	Not very effective	Most students tend to just wait for the blank areas and ignore the rest.	-
150	Effective		0
151	Extremely ineffective		0
152	Not very effective	Doesn't help with understanding the material.	-

153	Extremely ineffective	Fill-in-the-blanks make it difficult to grasp the topic, since a chosen word is predetermined, therefore not a choice.	-
154	Not very effective	Our work and level is too high to worry about filling in the blanks.	-
155	Effective	It's effective to a degree in teaching you how to help your skill, but it can feel monotonous.	-
156	Not very effective		0
157	Very effective	This was effective because it caused you to listen more carefully for details.	+
158	Not very effective		0
159	Extremely ineffective	This activity does not allow the student to focus on the passage as a whole, but rather one or two random words.	-
160	Not very effective		0
161			0
162	Not very effective	It's easier to gist, I get more out of it if I don't have to know and pick out every single detail.	-
163	Extremely ineffective	We did not do this very often.	-
164	Extremely ineffective		0
165	Effective		0
166	Effective	It is somewhat effective, but it can be detrimental to global reading skills.	+
167	Effective		0
168	Extremely ineffective	Subjective work doesn't help with any part of the language.	-
169	Not very effective		
170	Not very effective	HW creator doesn't know which part of the passage a student wouldn't understand, doesn't help.	-
171	Extremely ineffective		0
172	Not very effective		0
Total			4+ 20- No 13

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

d 1. Multiple-Choice (MC) (Listening Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Extremely effective	Helps us prepare for tests that have multiple choice answers.	+
136	Effective	After reading the questions and before listening, I start to form a list of vocab that I might hear for different answers. This is effective, but not nearly as effective as translation.	+
137	Extremely effective	Familiarizes you with the test format, and how to form an educated answer.	+
138	Effective	This kind of HW is at least practice for the DLPT.	+
139	Very effective	Able to pick answers easily if understand passage.	+
140	Extremely effective	Great practice for DLPT if done properly.	0
141	Effective	It was a lot more helpful because it would allow me to see what answers fit best, also a good practice for the DOPT.	+
142	Extremely effective	It prepares us for DLPT as long as there are many questions and they are difficult.	+
143	Effective	If done on the light level with properly worded English questions can help for the DLPT.	+
144	Extremely effective	Similar to DLPT and the questions help understand the passage.	+
145	Extremely effective	It helps me understand a Persian mind-set better and allows me to listen more effectively.	+
146	Extremely effective	Helped prepared for final test.	+
147	Not very effective	Usually too easy, and didn't push me just busy work.	-
148	Extremely effective	Prepares us for DLPT.	
149	Very effective	These are good for test prep, but help in	-

		understanding the passage before listening, thus not as helpful to overall learning.	
150	Extremely ineffective	It doesn't help us at all; if we don't know a passage, multiple choice will give us a 25% chance of being right, but in our actual job, there is no "Multiple Choice" (train how to fight).	-
151	Very effective	The DLPT is all about MC question, so learning to choose the right answer is important.	+
152	Extremely effective	Focus on understanding the important points and DLPT type questions.	+
153	Effective	Provides students possible answers to look for.	+
154	Extremely effective	Our DLPT will be MC, so it's great practice.	+
155	Extremely effective	It's as good for HW as it requires a level of rationalization.	+
156	Very effective	Effective insofar as tests are concerned.	+
157	Very effective	This aided me in using deduction in answering questions.	+
158	Very effective	Mirrors the DLPT, if they are good questions with proper English grammar and spelling.	+
159	Extremely effective		0
160	Effective	Preps for DLPT.	+
161	Extremely effective	Good for DLPT preparation.	+
162	Extremely effective	That's what the DLPT is so it prepares you.	+
163	Very effective	If the questions were written well, it was effective.	-
164	Very effective	Multiple choice helps those who aren't used to taking test, prepares for DLPT,	+
165	Not very effective	While this practice is effective for the DLPT, I consider it ineffective for learning the language.	+
166	Very effective		0
167	Effective		0
168	Extremely effective	Gives idea about the passage set up like the DLPT.	+
169	Effective	Helps prepare for the DLPT.	+
170	Not very effective	Very effective for practicing for DLPT, not effective for learning Farsi.	+
171	Effective	Mostly helpful, but some questions need attention.	+

172	Very effective	Helps with test-taking skills.	+
Total			28+ 4- No 4

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

d 2. Multiple-Choice (MC) (Reading Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Extremely effective	Helps us to determine the way of thought for Persian language so we can better choose the best answer.	+
136	Effective	Not as effective as translation, I feel Multiple choices HW prepares us for the DLPT.	+
137	Extremely effective	Familiarizes you with the test format, and how to form an educated answer.	+
138	Effective	This kind of HW is at least practice for the DLPT.	+
139	Very effective		0
140	Extremely effective		0
141	Effective	It was a good practice for the DOPT.	+
142	Extremely effective	It prepares us for DLPT as long as there are many questions and they are difficult.	+
143	Effective	If done on the light level with properly worded English questions can help for the DLPT.	+
144	Extremely effective	Similar to DLPT and the questions help understand the passage.	+
145	Extremely effective	It helps me understand a Persian mind-set better and focus reading comprehension.	+
146	Extremely effective	Helped prepare. Good practice for understanding the passage.	+
147	Effective	This is better for reading. More use of time.	+
148	Extremely effective	Prepares us for DLPT.	+
149	Very effective	These are good for test prep, but help in understanding the passage before listening, thus not as helpful to overall learning.	+
150	Extremely ineffective	It doesn't help us at all; if we don't know a passage, multiple choice will give us a 25% chance of being right, but in our actual job, there is no "Multiple Choice" (train how to fight).	-

151	Very effective		0
152	Extremely effective	Focus on understanding the important points and DLPT type questions.	+
153	Effective	Provides students possible answers to look for.	+
154	Extremely effective	Our DLPT will be MC so it's great practice.	+
155	Extremely effective	It's so good for HW as it requires a level of rationalization.	+
156	Very effective	Helps in passing tests.	+
157	Very effective	Aided with dedication also.	+
158	Very effective	Mirrors the DLPT, if they are good questions with proper English grammar and spelling.	+
159	Extremely effective		0
160	Effective	Preps for DLPT.	+
161	Extremely effective	Good for DLPT preparation.	+
162	Extremely effective	That's what the DLPT is so it prepares you.	+
163	Very effective	If the questions were written well.	+
164	Very effective		0
165	Very effective		0
166	Very effective		0
167	Effective		0
168	Extremely effective	Gives idea about the passage set up like the DLPT.	+
169	Effective	Helps prepare for the DLPT.	+
170	Not very effective	Very effective for practicing for DLPT, not effective for learning Farsi.	+
171	Effective	Mostly helpful, but some questions need attention.	+
172	Very effective	Helps with test-taking skills.	+
Total			29+ 1- No 8

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

e 1. Constructed Response (CR) (Listening Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Effective	Helpful for learning to pick out words.	+
136	Very effective	Causes me to listen until I understand most of the passage, better than Multiple Choice.	+
137	Extremely effective	Makes sure you know what went on.	+
138	Effective	While not so good of practice as multiple choices, it is a decent substitute when MC questions are not available.	+
139	Very effective	Shows how much are actually understood.	+
140	Effective	Effective in comprehension but not for tasks.	+
141	Effective	It allows me to summarize my understanding of the passage.	+
142	Effective		0
143	Not very effective	Not DLPT format, time consuming, I could better spend time self-studying.	-
144	Effective	This is often more difficult because the question doesn't lend itself to the text as much as M C.	-
145	Effective	Sometimes it shows I understood the listening. Other times it shows I tried to comprehend and understood some, but couldn't put it together in my head.	-
146	Very effective	Difficult sometimes, but good practice.	+
147	Effective	Requires deep thought, but still was a little bit of a time wasted.	+
148	Effective	Requires us to understand full meaning of passage, but isn't like the DLPT.	+
149	Extremely effective	Better for grasping all information without giving hints.	+
150	Extremely effective	Open-ended responses give us the opportunity to write what we heard or read based on our knowledge and not guess.	+
151	Effective	Almost the same as translation, understanding is important.	+
152	Very effective	Good exercise for review with a teacher.	+
153	Not very	In the end constructed responses are basically	-

	effective	translations.	
154	Very effective	It measures the amount of comprehension which to me is helpful.	+
155	Not very effective	I feel it's so dependent on your teacher, I don't like it.	-
156	Effective	Helpful with gist of a topic.	+
157	Effective	This allows me to know where I am weak in listening.	+
158	Very effective	Let's you explore in detail, meaning of a passage, more room to judge students' understanding.	+
159	Effective		0
160	Effective		0
161	Effective	Makes you understand the passage more.	+
162	Not very effective	I feel 3 rd semester should be tailored for DLPT, which is Multiple Choice.	-
163	Very effective	But only when the passage was at a level that could be understood by us.	+
164	Effective		0
165	Effective		0
166	Not very effective		0
167	Effective		0
168	Very effective	If the questions are worded correctly, it makes you truly understand the passage.	+
169	Effective	Makes us grasp the overall idea of a passage.	+
170	Effective	Very effective for practicing for DLPT, not effective for learning Farsi.	+
171	Effective	Allowed me to write down all I understood.	+
172	Not very effective	Sometimes helps to guess words' meaning through content.	+
Total			25+ 6-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

e 2. Constructed Response (CR) (Reading Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Effective	Helpful for learning to pick out words.	+
136	Very effective	Causes me to listen until I understand most of the passage, better than Multiple Choice.	+
137	Extremely effective	Allows you to give your own translation of what you read.	+
138	Effective	While not so good of practice as multiple choices, it is a decent substitute when MC questions are not available.	+
139	Very effective		0
140	Effective		0
141	Effective	I was able to give a summary of the reading in better detail.	+
142	Effective		0
143	Not very effective	Not DLPT format, time consuming, I could better spend time self-studying.	+
144	Very effective	It is easier because with the text one can get a better understanding and find answers.	+
145	Effective	It allows me to show where my weaknesses are in reading comprehension.	+
146	Very effective	Good for practicing more with the language.	+
147	Effective		0
148	Effective	Requires to understand full meaning of passage but isn't like the DLPT.	-
149	Extremely effective	Better for grasping all information without giving hints.	+
150	Extremely effective	Open-ended responses give us the opportunity to write what we heard or read based on our knowledge and not guess.	+
151	Effective		0
152	Very effective	Helps with understanding the important points.	+
153	Not very effective	In the end constructed responses are basically translations.	-
154	Very effective	It measures the amount of comprehension which to me is helpful.	+

155	Not very effective	I feel it's so dependent on your teacher, I don't like it.	-
156	Not very effective		0
157	Effective	Also pointed out weakness, mainly with vocabulary.	+
158	Very effective	Let's you explore in detail, meaning of a passage, more room to judge students' understanding.	+
159	Very effective	A good judge of overall understanding of a passage.	+
160	Effective		0
161	Effective	Makes you understand the passage more.	+
162	Not very effective		0
163	Very effective	We did this most often.	+
164	Effective		0
165	Effective		0
166	Not very effective		0
167	Effective		0
168	Very effective	If the questions are worded correctly, it makes you truly understand the passage.	+
169	Effective		0
170	Effective		0
171	Effective	Allowed me to write down all I understood.	+
172	Not very effective		0
Total			20+ 3- No 15

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 1. Research on Cultural Topics (Reading Comprehension)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Not very effective	Only learned a few new words from this. Never had the experience I expected. Thought I might have had more time, and less HW to complete it.	-
136	Very effective	It gives us a background into many of the topics that our other reading, writing HW is about. My research makes it easier for me to understand a lot of the native passages we get for HW.	+
137	Very effective	Familiarizes you with the culture.	+
138	Effective	I wish we had done more of this. Culture knowledge is the key to understanding certain passages.	+
139	Effective	Finding passages in Farsi and having to read about culture is good.	+
140	Extremely effective	Very helpful in teaching culture which is not taught often.	+
141	Effective	I learned more about my target language and its culture.	+
142	Effective	The cultural topic was helpful for learning culture of Iran, but little Farsi was learned.	+
143	Extremely ineffective	This is a very tedious process that could have been better spent self-studying.	-
144	Very effective	Culture is very important to understanding and I would have liked more time spent learning culture.	-
145	Effective	It helps me learn about the culture, but not really the language.	+
146	Very effective	Great for immersing in the language.	+
147	Not very effective	I learned very little about Farsi, just the culture.	-
148	Very effective	I think it is interesting and it helps give insight to reaching behind certain phrases that came up in listening and reading passages.	+
149	Not very effective	The cultural topics are typically at a higher level, so using time to research them in class is not needed.	-
150	Effective	Anyone can pull information from online though.	+
151	Not very effective	A lot of research required looking things up in	-

		English.	
152	Very effective	Helps understanding of colloquial phrases.	+
153	Extremely ineffective	Little was done in terms of cultural studies. Grasping context about culture and heritage is difficult in English, let alone Farsi.	-
154	Effective	Cultural topics help for background knowledge of items you might have a hard time understanding without knowing the culture.	+
155	Extremely effective	It is crucial to know the topics.	+
156	Not very effective	No reading is involved.	-
157	Not very effective	Research projects were often a side note, so not much time was allowed for these.	-
158	Effective	If it is a daily thing that's broken. Not related segments with accompanying vocabulary.	+
159	Extremely ineffective	This does not come across well with students and often seems like busy work.	-
160	Very effective	Recommended time in class for watching Iranian movies with discussion and writing assignments.	+
161	Extremely effective	Good for briefing new articles and understanding culture.	+
162	Effective		
163	Effective		
164	Effective		
165	Extremely effective	Research on cultural topics in any form helps introduce cultural phrases and references better. It can help when a historical event or cultural norm is referenced in passing in news or other types of passages.	+
166	Effective	It helps to broaden vocabulary and understanding of language from a deeper cultural perspective.	+
167	Very effective		
168	Effective	Only to a small extent. Can be a time waster.	-
169	Effective		
170	Effective		
171	Not very effective	By the time the 3 rd semester got here, we had very little time to prepare.	-
172	Effective		
Total			19+ 12-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 2. Research on Cultural Topics (Writing)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Not very effective	Only good from this came by having teachers check and fix my work.	-
136	Effective	Helps solidify the information in my brain.	+
137	Very effective	Helps you form good sentences.	+
138	Effective	Writing things down helps to remember them.	+
139	Effective	Helps with vocab and spelling.	+
140	Extremely effective		
141	Effective	It allowed me to practice my writing in my target language.	+
142	Effective	The cultural topic was helpful for learning culture of Iran, but little Farsi was learned.	+
143	Extremely ineffective	This is a very tedious process that could have been better spent self-studying.	-
144	Not very effective	Writing about culture serves little purpose in learning other than to prove that research was done.	-
145	Effective	If done in Farsi, it helps me use the target language.	+
146	Very effective	Good practice for language use.	+
147	Not very effective		
148	Not very effective	Usually done in English so it doesn't help my language skills.	-
149	Not very effective	The cultural topics are typically at a higher level, so using time to research them in class is not needed.	-
150	Effective	N/A	+
151	Extremely effective	Helps with constructing the language, and requires knowledge.	+
152	Very effective	Helps understanding colloquial phrases.	+
153	Extremely ineffective	Little was done in terms of cultural studies. Grasping context about culture and heritage is difficult in English, let alone Farsi.	-
154	Effective	Cultural topics help for background knowledge of items you might have a hard time understanding without knowing the culture.	+

155	Extremely effective	It is crucial to know the topics.	+
156	Not very effective	Little writing is involved.	-
157	Not very effective	We really did not do writings about culture.	-
158	Not very effective	Potential for learning, but mostly feels like a waste of time.	-
159	Extremely ineffective		
160	Very effective	Recommended time in class for watching Iranian movies with discussion and writing assignments.	+
161	Effective	We haven't done this for HW, but I think it would be effective.	+
162	Extremely ineffective	Never had this HW.	-
163	Effective		
164	Effective		
165	Extremely effective	Writing in Farsi, even in these smallest amounts out of my own creativity always helps me learn.	+
166	Effective	It helps to broaden vocabulary and understanding of language from a deeper cultural perspective.	+
167	Very effective		
168	Not very effective	I don't get anything from writing about culture except a headache.	-
169	Not very effective		
170	Not very effective	Had no such HW in 3 rd semester.	-
171	Not very effective	By the time the 3 rd semester got here, we had very little time to prepare.	-
172	Not very effective		17+ 12-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

f 3. Research on Cultural Topics (Speaking)

Department E

Questionnaire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Effective	Slowly encouraged me to be less shy and nervous when speaking in target language to others.	+
136	Effective	Helps me recognize words when I hear them since I know how they are pronounced and have spoken them myself.	+
137	Very effective	Good practice for speaking on difficult subjects.	+
138	Effective	The best way to learn a subject is to teach it to someone else. Speaking practice is often about reporting what you have learned, i. e., teaching.	+
139	Effective	Necessary to make what you read make sense in your own words. Very good.	+
140	Extremely effective	Best public speaking and practice.	+
141	Effective	It helps doing public speaking in my target language.	+
142	Very effective	If read from a premade script, ineffective; however, if done without written aid, it is very helpful.	+
143	Effective	Can be a good exercise, if on a simple level and no writing except for bullet points to be delivered the next day was the assignment.	-
144	Extremely effective	Speaking practice is always helpful, but I don't think that it makes the best HW assignment.	-
145	Extremely effective	It forces me to use the target language and practice it better.	+
146	Very effective	Great for broadening the language.	+
147	Effective	Practice for speaking in anything is good.	+
148	Effective	Requires me to fully understand the topic.	+
149	Not very effective	The cultural topics are typically at a higher level, so using time to research them in class is not needed.	-

150	Very effective		+
151	Very effective		
152	Very effective	Helps understanding colloquial and phrases.	+
153	Not very effective	Only in the sense of news and current events.	+
154	Very effective	This is a way to broaden your speaking, vocab, and talk about all different types of things.	+
155	Extremely effective	This forces higher level speaking.	+
156	Very effective	Helps someone get used to speaking Farsi in front of teachers.	+
157	Effective	This was effective. It allowed me to combine with new vocab.	+
158	Very effective	Aids in practice speaking skills and speaking in the target language.	+
159	Not very effective	Only good in the sense of practice in producing the language.	+
160	Effective	Recommended time in class for watching Iranian movies with discussion and writing assignments.	+
161	Effective	We haven't done this for HW, but I think it would be effective.	+
162	Effective	Prepares you for OPI.	+
163	Effective		
164	Effective		
165	Extremely effective		
166	Very effective	It helps to broaden vocabulary and understanding of language from a deeper cultural perspective.	+
167	Very effective		
168	Effective	This helps with my pronunciation.	+
169	Extremely ineffective		
170	Not very effective	Speaking on cultural topics was for culture presentation, not HW.	-
171	Not very effective	By the time the 3 rd semester got here, we had very little time to prepare.	-
172	Effective	Helps with current events or history; sometimes interesting.	+
Total			27+ 5-

Question 2: How effective were the following types of homework assignments in helping you learn Persian Farsi?

g. A combination of two or three types of homework

- Translation and transcription (Listening and Reading)

- Filling blanks, translation, and summarization (Listening and Reading)

Department E

Question naire Number	Responses	Participants' Explanations	+ -
135	Effective	The effectiveness varied based on the amount given and the combination. We needed quality not quantity.	+
136	Very effective		
137	Extremely effective	Good to get a little touch on everything.	+
138	Extremely ineffective	Adding extra tasks just makes it into busywork.	-
139	Very effective	Get the best of both worlds.	+
140	Extremely effective	The 2 nd choice is the way I personally learn the transcription is a time waster.	+
141	Not very effective	When there's too many things going on its distracting, but also homework takes up a lot of that that I could have used to study.	-
142	Not very effective	Translation and summarization is fine but transcription and filling blanks, is a waste of time.	+
143	Extremely ineffective	If we just have HW. Instead of self-study, multiple choices should be all we get. It will prepare us for the DLPT.	-
144	Extremely effective	HW should be varied.	+
145	Extremely ineffective	The two types chosen are usually incompatible and overload the mind.	-
146	Effective	If they align (same subject) good, but if they have no connection, less helpful.	+
147	Very effective	Listening and translation was very helpful.	+
148	Effective		
149	Extremely ineffective	This may be good at first, but later on it just becomes time consuming and waste of time for	-

		new research and vocabulary review.	
150	Extremely ineffective	Not everyone needs help with this, for many students it's a waste of time; better self-study.	-
151	Effective	Effective up to the second half of the 3 rd semester.	-
152	Not very effective	Takes too much time.	-
153	Not very effective	Depending on arrangement, could either stress me out or could be extremely helpful.	-
154	Very effective	It's a way to practice more than one skill at a time.	+
155	Very effective	With development in all fields you really grow.	+
156	Not very effective	These often result in fatigue and guesses as answers.	-
157	Effective	This was effective to a point but after lead to just slipping a listening every few seconds in order to transcribe and figure out what it said.	-
158	Very effective	It's good to assign different tasks as they are useful.	+
159	Effective	It really varies with the combination but as a whole transcription is not effective and is also very time consuming.	+
160	Extremely ineffective	No help if transcription is wrong; translation won't work.	-
161	Effective	We don't do these but I think they would all be very helpful especially for our job.	+
162	Not very effective	Prepares you for OPI.	+
163	Effective		
164	Extremely ineffective	Transcription and translation are a complete waste of time and is extremely frustrating. Getting, short answer questions, or multiple choice are much better options.	-
165	Not very effective		
166	Effective	Helps maintain skill in multiple areas.	+
167	Not very effective		
168	Not very effective	Too much HW makes me not do as thorough of a job as I would like.	-
169	Not very effective		
170	Extremely effective		

171	Effective	It would have been helpful to lessen quantity in order to increase quality.	+
172	Not very effective	Not enough practice in any one skill.	-
Total			16+ 15-



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